









**CLAUDE KITCHIN**  
**and the Wilson War Policies**



*Photo by Brown Brothers*

CLAUDE KITCHIN

# CLAUDE KITCHIN and the Wilson War Policies

BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO  
ETHEL STEPHENS ARNETT



## PREFACE

SINCE Wilson returned from Paris in 1919, a beaten man, we have learned much as to how and why we were led into the World War. The picture is not yet clear in all details; but thanks to the testimony of his own subordinates, the disclosures of European archives and personages, and the revelations of the Nye Committee, his Administration now stands self-revealed.

But there is another side of the picture which no one has yet disclosed. That the militant, unneutral, and finally belligerent of the Wilson Administration met with powerful opposition in Congress, especially from the leadership of his own party, has been widely recognized but scantily considered. Attention heretofore has centered upon the role of the Administration and left in shadowy background those heroic leaders on Capitol Hill who, with greater poise and more prophetic vision, sought to block our road to war.

Chief among these in the House of Representatives and most widely influential of them all was Claude Kitchin. Majority leader in the House, trusted and loved by all who knew him, he held a position that was second in power to that of the President. And of the Democratic leaders who threw their weight against the



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President's war policies he was the most resolute and unyielding. He was able, in fact, to lead a majority of his colleagues *almost* to the point of blocking the President's tragic course. Almost, but not quite; and thereby hangs our tale.

"Clothed with the powers given him by the Constitution," said Kitchin, "a President of the United States can, at his will, without let or hindrance from Congress, create a situation which makes war the only alternative for this nation." And that is exactly what Wilson did. Kitchin and those of his colleagues who dared to withstand to the last the powers of a popular Administration, the tirades of a venal press, and the censure of many of their constituents, were the real heroes in that tragedy of errors.

As Professor Charles A. Beard has said, if anything is important to Americans it is how we got into the last World War and how we may stay out of the next world war. Too much light cannot be thrown upon this question.

It has been said that "what we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history." But that is one of those dangerous half-truths which democracies must not permit to deceive or discourage them. Democracies in particular, for in these alone can the past be interpreted with reasonable regard for the truth, and in these alone can the implications of past blunders be driven home to a potentially vocal electorate.

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Although the forces primarily responsible for our being dragged into the last World War represented a small fraction of the population, we must not overlook the fact that large elements of the electorate were made to tingle with the prospect of heightened profits. Can these be made to realize in a similar situation hereafter that such profits are all too dearly bought in the long run? Therein lies our main hope of keeping out of the next world war.

Whatever light this book may throw upon such problems, however, is secondary to its main purpose. A realistic acquaintance with the career of Claude Kitchin should impress historians with the obligation which devolves upon their profession to rectify the grossly distorted impressions of him created in his day by the press and other agencies of propaganda. Hitherto he has been almost ignored by historical writers and all but forgotten by the public. Few histories of his period mention his name, and none accords him adequate recognition. Insofar as he is remembered at all by the public, he is doubtless thought of in most cases as he was caricatured by malignant propaganda.

If any explanation is needed as to why the emphasis is here placed upon his relations to the Wilson war policies, this is due, first, to the fact that herein lay his chief contribution to American history and, second, to the scarcity of available information concerning other phases of his career. As explained in the note on page

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301, he left an exceptionally complete set of records for the years of his party leadership in the House, 1915-1923, but relatively few and rather scattering documents for the earlier years. Then too, he was much in the public print in the years of his leadership, but only occasionally received notice in the previous years. And after he became majority leader, in 1915, his statesmanly interests were in very large measure absorbed in questions relating to the war and its aftermath; hence most of the documents of historical value which he left pertain to these questions.

If he failed to accomplish those of his major purposes which ran counter to the objectives of the Wilson Administration, it was because the President was armed with superior political and Constitutional power. But Kitchin's principles, thwarted as they were in his time, did not die with him. His position on all important questions upon which he disagreed with the Wilson Administration has come since to prevail overwhelmingly in the public mind. Furthermore, his fundamental objective, of which his war policies were only manifestations, has more recently grown enormously in popular favor. If this growth was stimulated mainly by the bitter experiences of the depression years and cultivated by a popular President with a happy faculty for the dramatization of the liberal point of view, it nevertheless stems back to the liberalism of Kitchin and his group. For his endeavors to prevent the country's

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militarization, to bring about genuine neutrality, to keep out of the European madness, and to shield "the great silent masses" from an excessive share of the war's burdens were all part and parcel of a lifelong struggle for social justice and a better order of life for the common man.

Consigned to oblivion by venal propaganda, Kitchin must needs be brought into true perspective, as one of the ablest statesmen of his time and one of the most honorable and courageous of all time.

In the preparation of this book, the author is indebted to many friends and co-workers. Most important of these is Dr. B. B. Kendrick, his colleague and friend, who from the start has been his chief inspiration. Mrs. Kate Mills Kitchin and other members of the Kitchin family, notably Dr. Thurman Kitchin, have been particularly helpful in giving a woof to the warp of the story. The Honorable John Bassett Moore, the Honorable Josephus Daniels, Senator Bennett Champ Clark, Representatives J. W. Collier, R. L. Doughton, and Charles S. Sloan, Messrs. Allen Benson, A. L. Brooks, and Carl Goerch have rendered significant aid. The authorities in various libraries are thanked for their generous coöperation. This applies with particular force to Dr. J. G. de R. Hamilton and Mrs. Elizabeth H. Cotten, of the document division of the University of North Carolina Library at Chapel Hill, and to Miss Sue Vernon Williams, of the Woman's College Library

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ALEX MATHEWS ARNETT

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**and the Wilson War Policies**



## CHAPTER I

### A SON OF THE OLD SOUTH

“ — AND, Cap'm Kitchin, please take my valuables to my sister Maria,” was the dying request of young John Arrington, a Confederate color-bearer, mortally wounded in the battle of Spottsylvania. Scion of a rich planter family which from early colonial times had enjoyed the Old South's way of life at its best, he had gone forth when barely sixteen to fight in its defense. At Chancellorsville he had seized the flag from its dying bearer and since had borne it himself. At Spottsylvania he had been wounded when the flag was shot from his hands; but, ignoring his wounds, he had recovered it, climbed the breastworks, and was waving it proudly when struck by the fatal shot. He died in the arms of his beloved “Cap'm Kitchin.”

The mission with which the handsome captain was entrusted proved a fateful one. Himself but a few years older than John, of congenial temperament and similar background, he had developed a warm attachment for his brave young color-bearer. The ties had been strengthened by a daguerreotype which John always carried, a picture of his sister Maria. “The pret-

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tiest thing I've ever seen!" said Captain Kitchin. John had promised to take him down and introduce him to her on their next furlough. This hope was now blasted, but the mission remained as a cherished, if tragic, substitute.

Maria was all that he had dreamed, and more. Beautiful, intelligent, refined — adorable. It was quite in keeping with Captain Kitchin's decisive and resolute character that they became engaged on his first visit and were married on the next. Her mettle was evinced when she readily agreed to go with him to the front and live as near the lines as seemed reasonably safe.

The honeymoon was brief. Within a few weeks he was wounded and captured. He was held in Federal prisons until six months after the war was ended, his detention being prolonged because he persistently refused to take the oath of allegiance. Finally released in the autumn of 1865, he rejoined his bride. They made their home on one of the Kitchin plantations near Scotland Neck, in Halifax County, North Carolina.<sup>1</sup>

The captain was a most interesting character. Six feet four inches, athletic and commanding, he was known for a bravery that often approached sheer recklessness. He was among the first in his state to volunteer, leaving Emory and Henry College in April, 1861, less than two months before he was to graduate. He remained in active service until captured in the autumn

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of 1864. In civilian life he was high-tempered but generous to a fault. He would fly into a rage, thrash a man roundly, go home, bemoan the matter all night, seek out his antagonist next morning, apologize and make friends. On one occasion he became very angry with a Negro and cursed him with every imprecation in and out of the dictionary. Then, as he watched the poor Negro walking dejectedly away, he was struck with pity, called him back and made amends by giving him a bag of salt pork. While the "Cap'm" was always ready for a fight upon extreme provocation, the usual outlet for his wrath was "cussin'." And according to all who knew him, he could "cuss" as eloquently as a Kentucky colonel. He was often turned out of the Baptist church for this sin. In fact, it was almost an annual event to turn out the "Cap'm" for his "cussin'" and afterward persuade him to rejoin. Generally he went back with reluctance, saying, "I know damned well I'll be turned out again, for when I get mad I cuss in spite o' hell." On the other hand, he could never refuse a friend or neighbor in distress. He would often endorse notes when he knew that he was likely to be the loser. Altogether, he is said to have lost some forty thousand dollars in this way.<sup>2</sup>

In so far as William Hodge Kitchen, or "Cap'm Buck," as he was affectionately called, inherited the capacities and virtues of the planter aristocracy, he got them from his mother, who came from a home of

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wealth, culture, and refinement. His father was of yeoman stock; sturdy, unassuming, democratic. The "Cap'm" partook more of the paternal character. He could not endure the least suggestion of snobbery, always dressed plainly, and rejoiced in the common touch.

Maria Arrington Kitchin, though she became quite reconciled to her husband's plainness, even to his improprieties, and was greatly devoted to him, was herself more fully a product of gentle blood and culture. She was descended from the Macons, the Battles, the Clarks, the Alstons, as well as the Arringtons; families productive of much that was best in the *ante-bellum* life of North Carolina. While the qualities of both were combined in their children, she seems to have been more influential in their training.\*

Back in Halifax County, where Captain and Mrs. Kitchin made their home, things were never again as they were in "the good old days before the war." Probably no community in North Carolina had more nearly lived up to the planter tradition. In the fertile valley of the Roanoke River, just below the Virginia border and some forty miles back from Albemarle Sound, it was in the region of the largest and wealthiest plan-

\* The fact that Captain Kitchin was born in Alabama, as recorded in collected biographies, may be misleading. His parents, of North Carolina stock, had acquired a plantation in Alabama and had moved down there temporarily shortly before he was born; but the family moved back to the old home when he was still a child.



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tations of the state. It is said to have contained more blue blood than any other county in North Carolina.<sup>3</sup> This should not be taken too seriously, for the strains of blue blood in the veins of Southern planters were pretty thin at best; their heritage was more cultural than biological. But in a few favored regions they had developed a way of life which was superior in many ways to any that has since existed in this country. The economic, social, and cultural wreckage wrought in such communities by the Civil War and its aftermath is the prime tragedy of American history. The casualties — very much higher in proportion to population in the South than in the North — seem to have been especially high for the white population of Halifax County.<sup>4</sup> To those who were lost — in general, the flower of their race — must be added their possible progeny. And those who returned were faced with all but hopeless poverty. Even those who had been the wealthiest now were poor. The accumulated savings of many generations invested in slaves were gone forever. Of current wealth, about all that remained was a mass of worthless Confederate and state “securities,” and “credits” in banks that were all insolvent. New credit to finance rehabilitation could scarcely be had on any terms, for real estate — the one remaining asset — was a drug on the market. Hence the rise of the iniquitous crop-lien system, whereby the farmer or planter pledged his expected crop before it was planted



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to obtain credit for supplies at ruinous time prices. He was further handicapped by policies of government, which, in the new era, were highly favorable to industry, trade, and finance, and neglectful, often deleterious, toward distressed agriculture. The inevitable result was the rise of a business man's *régime* — in the South as elsewhere — and the permanent submergence of the agricultural classes. Wealth and political power shifted from country to town, as did social and cultural standards.<sup>6</sup>

Some communities resisted the change more stubbornly than others. Among the most resolute in such resistance was the home community of the Kitchins. Indeed there still remain in that locality (as in some others) families which, in spite of more or less depleted fortunes, have retained to a surprising degree the gracious hospitality, the social charm and the humanistic culture that characterized the *ante-bellum* planters at their best. Among these are still Kitchins. In general, if such families remained rural and agricultural, their influence in the *post-bellum* South became increasingly circumscribed, usually limited to their own communities and, if these were in the vicinity of enterprising towns, no longer dominant even there. Again the Kitchins were among the exceptions. However great the wreckage of their family fortunes and the besetments in the way of recouping them, Captain and Mrs. Kitchin managed by heroic struggle and

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sacrifice to maintain much that was best in the old way of life and to raise and educate nine sons and two daughters.<sup>6</sup> From this family (including the Captain himself) came three Congressmen, one of whom was also a governor of his state; a college president; a state senator; several large-scale planters; and two matrons of locally prominent families.\*

The generation that followed the Civil War in the South has been classified in two groups: those who wished to preserve a basically agrarian economy, society, and culture; and those who wished prime attention given to industrialization and the exploitation of the South's resources, with the aid of Northern capital. The former group, in the main, were ready to welcome a steady and wholesome growth of industry and trade, under local control and unstimulated by special favors from government, but were quite opposed to the development of an industrial-commercial civilization like that of the Northeast; in other words, to the "Yankeefication" of the South. They looked to the Old South, more or less idealized and glorified by tradition, for their pattern. The latter group, fostering what came to be called the New South movement, frankly and enthusiastically accepted the Northern pat-

\* Captain Kitchin's sons and daughters, in order as to their ages were as follows: Samuel Boaz, planter; William Walton, lawyer, Congressman, governor; Claude, lawyer, Congressman; John Arrington, planter; Paul, lawyer, state senator; Gertrude (Mrs. A. McDowell); Richard Vann, various occupations; Annie Maria (Mrs. Charles L. McDowell); Thurman Delna, physician, president of Wake Forest College; Leland H., planter; Teddy Alston, various occupations.

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tern, accepted it quite as uncritically as the ardent traditionalist strove for the resuscitation of the Old South.<sup>7</sup> The Kitchins belonged to the former group.

In the bitter years of political reconstruction the carpetbag-scalawag-Negro *régime* was naturally anathema to "Cap'm Buck." Doubtless much of the "cussin'" that put him out of the church was occasioned by this intolerable situation. His own district, where the whites were outnumbered over two to one, sent a Negro representative to Washington until 1878, when the "Cap'm" scored a temporary triumph by winning the seat himself; but he held it only one term, after which it reverted to the Republicans — mostly Negroes — and remained with them until recaptured by his son, Claude, at the end of the century.<sup>8</sup>

The state as a whole was redeemed from this *régime* by 1876, but some portions with heavy Negro majorities continued the struggle much later. Even the restoration of native white supremacy, however, did not bring relief to impoverished, exploited, debt-ridden agriculture. As a matter of fact, contrary to a widespread belief, the new "Bourbon" Democracy in the South did not represent primarily agricultural interests. It was a business man's *régime*. It is widely known that the policies of the Federal government in the new era favored business interests to the detriment of agriculture; it is not so well known, though amply verified, that those of state and local governments —

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in the South as in the North — did likewise. In the *post-bellum* South, planters and farmers fought a losing fight against merchants, manufacturers, and money-lenders, together with their allies in the legal profession. The Tilden-Cleveland Democracy represented an alliance between the New South, with its business ambitions, and the Northeast, with its established business ascendancy. The rule of the “Bourbons” in the South, in the late ’seventies and ’eighties, was marked, in the main, by honest, economical, *laissez-faire* government; but its economy was niggardly, especially in matters of schools and other public services. And its system of taxation, though not heavy in the gross, was antiquated and quite unfair to agricultural interests. The burden fell upon polls and tangible property. These the farmer could not conceal, while the securities held by business men were known to have largely escaped. Furthermore the well-known abuses of the public interests by railroads and other corporations were either neglected or ineffectually dealt with by governmental authorities.<sup>9</sup>

Such evils were early perceived by Captain Kitchin. When in the ’eighties the Farmers’ Alliance arose to protest against them, he was an outspoken leader in the movement. Always opposed to the robbery of the farmers by the protective tariff to enrich the manufacturers, he now embraced the broader program developed by the Alliance to redress the balance between

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business and agriculture. As prices were constantly falling and debts correspondingly mounting in terms of products, it was proposed to stay or reverse the trend by the remonetization of silver. If this would mean a "dishonest dollar," as conservative business men claimed, "how honest, pray," said Alliance men, "is a dollar that has doubled and trebled itself in twenty-odd years?" The farmers called, furthermore, for graduated income and inheritance taxes, rural credits, reform of the banking system, government ownership of such key industries as transportation and communication, postal savings, rural delivery of mail, and various political reforms. To these, in the Southern states, were added insistent demands for a fairer system of taxation, regulation of public service corporations, the establishment of railway commissions, and liberal expansion of the educational system.<sup>10</sup>

By 1890 the dissenting group had grown to such proportions as to capture the Democratic party in most of the Southern states, including North Carolina. It achieved a number of local reforms: more adequate taxation of railroads and other corporations, the establishment of a railway commission, and somewhat larger appropriations for schools. In the matter of education the most notable accomplishments of the farmers' movement in North Carolina were the establishment of the State College of Agriculture and Engineering, at Raleigh; the State Normal School, at Greensboro



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(which became the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina), and the Agricultural and Technical College for Negroes, at Greensboro.<sup>11</sup>

But the major problems of the farmers were beyond the reach of local governments, and as there was evidently no chance of their capturing either of the major national parties they were balked — unless they could launch a successful third party. But this seemed to offer a hope. If the agricultural South and West could unite, and perhaps induce a considerable number of their fellow-sufferers in the field of industrial labor to join them, what might be the possibilities for reforming the system! In the South, however, an ugly question arose. If the white vote were to split, would not the Negroes again become a menacing balance of power as in Reconstruction times? The Negroes were much more race-conscious than class-conscious, and were easily victimized by political self-seekers. Although some of them had caught the spirit of the Farmers' Alliance and organized lodges of their own, most of them were still sentimentally attached to the party which had given them freedom and, quite unaware of new issues, were ready to support it because of past favors. In the main they could not be counted upon to support a third party. And the Republican leadership in the South offered, to say the least, a poor alternative to the Bourbons. Besides, if the white vote were split and another Negro-Republican *régime* were

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established, violent disorders were all but inevitable. Hence the Southern Alliance was confronted with the question whether boldly to commit itself to the new People's Party, already launched by the Western farmers, or to struggle for reform in the conservative Cleveland-dominated Democracy. The majority chose the bolder course. But in so doing, they split the Farmers' Alliance.<sup>12</sup>

In the three-cornered election of 1892 in North Carolina the Democrats won — but only by a plurality. It was apparent that if the People's Partyites, or Populists, were to combine with the Republicans, they could carry the state. This idea was naturally tempting to politicians. Such fusion was talked of in other states of the South, but only in North Carolina was there actually formed a Republican-Populist coalition. Strange bedfellows, perhaps, but they won the offices in 1894 and held most of them until 1900. The result was a situation remindful of Reconstruction times. Bitter partisan politics and race strife, which culminated in bloody riots in 1898, eclipsed the objectives of the movement.<sup>13</sup> Many Alliancemen — among them Captain Kitchen — came to feel that their movement had been betrayed by hungry politicians. Though the Captain had gone with the rebels into the new party, he became bitterly disappointed with "fusion" and its consequences. Bewildered for a time, like many others, he was greatly relieved when the national Democracy was

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captured in 1896 by the Populistic elements and threw over the Cleveland leadership for that of William J. Bryan. In his own state the agrarian Populists were still "fused" with the nationally pro-business Republicans, while the Democrats had in spirit gone Populist. What to do? The younger generation pointed the way.<sup>14</sup>

For there had arisen in the meantime a younger group of leaders within the Democratic party in North Carolina, as elsewhere in the South, bent upon reforms of a Populistic type but insistent that they be accomplished through the old party. In other words the Bryan Democracy. This group, headed by Charles B. Aycock, included two sons of Captain Kitchin, Will and Claude.

Claude Kitchin was born March 24, 1869, in the planter community of Scotland Neck. Like all his brothers and sisters, he was prepared for college at Vine Hill Academy, the local school. Eight of the nine boys attended Wake Forest College, a Baptist institution of high standing, particularly noted in the South for oratory and debating. Having already won two medals for oratory at Vine Hill Academy, Claude continued such triumphs at Wake Forest. An excellent student, he graduated with honors in 1888, at the age of nineteen.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile his career had not been without romance. The village of Wake Forest was made up almost entirely of people connected with a college for men.



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Raleigh, the nearest city, was sixteen miles away — in a horse-and-buggy, non-hitch-hiking age. Hence there was vigorous competition among the boys for the few girls in Wake Forest of dateable or even sub-dateable age. But Claude had the advantage of being one of the most handsome and socially charming boys in the community. And his ambitions ran high. One of the most eminent professors on the faculty was Luther Rice Mills, and it so happened that he had a charming young daughter, Kate, whose company was generally coveted by socially ambitious students. When Claude first appeared at Wake Forest, a rollicking adolescent of fifteen, Kate was a budding young lady of fourteen, not yet permitted to "go with the boys." There was no opportunity for Claude to meet her; in fact, as she says, he *never* met her. But he passed her in the village almost daily, and invariably he smiled, which she was quick to notice — with inward response. But that was about all, until the academy which she attended gave a picnic down by the river and permitted each girl to invite a boy. She invited Claude. They went fishing together. . . .

Long before the end of his college course they were madly in love. Being a son of "Cap'm Buck," he abhorred the idea of a long engagement; yet he was only nineteen when he graduated and could not qualify for the Bar, his chosen profession, until he was twenty-one. He had to read law in the meantime. The "Cap'm"

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characteristically blazed a way. He obtained a position for Claude as assistant register of deeds in his county and arranged for him to read law on the side. He went up to Wake Forest and besought Professor Mills:

“Let’s let these children get married. I’ll see that they don’t suffer. They’re so desperately in love it’s cruel to keep ’em apart.”

And so within six months after Claude’s graduation he and Kate Mills were married. The experiences of their early married life are character-revealing. Both had too much pride to accept a position of dependence upon Captain Kitchin; they would rather endure privation. Though a large planter and a moderately successful small-town lawyer, the Captain was by no means affluent. His plantations were chronically in debt and yielded little or no profit, especially in the hard times of the late ’eighties and early ’nineties; so that he was often short of money himself. On his frequent visits to Halifax, the county seat, he took quantities of home-grown products to the young couple. They gratefully received these provisions but were determined otherwise to live on Claude’s small salary, though it meant a much lower standard of living than either had formerly enjoyed.

The times that tried their characters most, however, were the first two or three years after Claude hung out his shingle in Scotland Neck in the spring of 1890

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as a full-fledged lawyer. Agricultural regions were sorely depressed at the time. Cases were few and fees were meager. They accepted the bounty of the Captain to the extent of one of his houses in town, rent-free, and supplies from the abundant produce of his farms. Merchants were ready to grant them credit but, aware that pay-day would come, they kept their accounts to a minimum. Claude took pride in the fact that he wore one pair of summer-weight trousers continuously for two years. In cold weather he ran to his office to keep warm and thought it good sport. Mrs. Kitchen declares that they were both happier in those years than they would have been if financially unembarrassed.

But insistent demands for cash kept arising. For example, the servant had to be paid. And Mrs. Kitchen had to have a servant, for aside from the usual demands of housekeeping, there were children to care for; the stork was as punctual in his visits to the young couple as he had been to Claude's parents. One day when cash was urgently needed and Claude's pockets were vacuously empty, he decided in desperation to call upon the Captain for a loan. He walked out to "Gallberry," his father's estate about two miles from town. As he trudged up the driveway he heard the "Cap'm" storming at a Negro:

"Get the hell off from here, damn you! I told you yesterday I didn't have a goddam cent. Why the hell do you come pestering me again! . . ."

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Just at that moment another Negro turned into the driveway in a dilapidated buggy and beckoned to him.

"Mr. Claude, I's got in some trouble, an' bein's as you's a lawyer, I 'lowed you could he'p me out."

"Do you have any money?"

"Yassir. How much do it take?"

"Do you have five dollars?"

"Yassir; I sho is."

Claude got in the buggy with him and rode back to town, collected his fee in advance, directed his client to meet him at the magistrate's office in half an hour, and ran home. Mrs. Kitchin heard his sprightly foot-falls and met him in the hall. Both were radiant as he handed her the money and told what had happened. An hour or so later his client was cleared. In a day or two another Negro came with his troubles. This time Claude doubled his fee, and again cleared his man. Then came a damage suit against a mill for the beating of a child worker. This netted him somewhat more. He never had to ask his father for financial aid.

In time, as his ability became known, he was employed upon important cases in neighboring towns, and his affable personality won him numerous friends. He was invited to speak at various public gatherings. One of these speeches, a commencement address, he preserved in manuscript — which is fortunate, for it reveals his position on the major question then confronting his section.<sup>16</sup>

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This was the time when Henry W. Grady, chief prophet of the New South, was at the height of his fame. Grady was making his famous speeches North and South on various occasions, writing editorials for the *Atlanta Constitution* and articles for national magazines, eloquently pleading for sectional reconciliation and for Northern investments in the exploitation of Southern resources. Grady was a lovable and eloquent man, worshipped especially by the group in the South eager to follow the Northern, industrial-commercial pattern. How would Claude react to the new gospel? In this commencement address he was in hearty accord with the movement for sectional reconciliation, but of the rest of Grady's doctrine he approved only in part. He loved Grady, "to whom all honor and praise are due for his sublime efforts to bring the two sections together and make their great hearts beat as one"; but he condemned Grady's tendency to turn his back upon the South's past and accept uncritically the Northern way. Industrialization within limits was desirable but it must not become the *summum bonum*. In this matter he preferred the position of Henry Watterson, whom he quoted: "If we are to have a New South let it be an honest New South. . . . Let us stand by all that was good in the Old South, . . . and, with our past alike to warn and to cheer us, let us turn our faces to the great future." <sup>17</sup>



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Claude did not become an important figure in politics until the late 'nineties. After 1896 he was an ardent supporter of Bryan and his principles. He had embraced the spirit of Populism in so far as it represented a spontaneous uprising of the exploited classes, but he abhorred the trickery of office-hunting politicians who, to his mind, had betrayed the movement. By 1898 it had become apparent that the Populist-Republican coalition in North Carolina was doomed. The Bryan Democracy would absorb much of the voting strength of the rank and file agrarians. Hence in that year the Populist politicians were ready to change bandwagons, to pull away from their Republican associates and negotiate a new alliance — dividing the offices — with the Democrats. Many Democrats, including Will Kitchin, favored this as good practical politics, but Claude was unalterably opposed to such a deal. Will, who was three years older than Claude, had established himself as a lawyer at Roxboro, in another Congressional district. He, too, was a very handsome and eloquent man imbued with the same liberal principles that characterized his father, "Cap'm Buck," and his brother, Claude. In 1896 Will was the only Democrat in North Carolina elected to Congress. In 1898 both the Kitchin brothers were on the State Democratic Executive Committee. Aside from Claude, the committee was known to be tied on the question of a hook-up with the Populists, hence he would

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cast the deciding vote. Both his father and his brother besought him to yield. It was thought that Will's chances of reëlection to Congress might hinge on this move. Claude replied that he loved his brother and would do everything in his power — consistent with his principles — to help him win, but he could not conscientiously approve of a deal with men who were ready to join either side on condition that a satisfactory bargain could be struck in the matter of parceling out the jobs. So the re-fusion was blocked by Claude's refusal to sanction it.<sup>18</sup> The Populists renewed their alliance with the Republicans and lost many of the offices which they had previously gained. Will remained in Congress.

In 1900 came the famous Aycock campaign. Charles B. Aycock, who was mainly interested in promoting a great educational renaissance in his state and section, along with a general broadening of the social functions of government, was willing to commit himself, as Democratic candidate for governor, to the disfranchisement of the bulk of the Negro voters on grounds of illiteracy, provided, in fairness to the Negroes, the Old-South principle of *noblesse oblige* were carried out. If they were to be deprived of effective participation in the government, it would then become all the more obligatory upon the whites to make generous provisions for them. Their schools and other publicly supported institutions must be improved along with those for



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whites. Some of the politicians are said to have balked at this, but they yielded when Aycock threatened to withdraw from the race if they did not agree to play fairly in the matter. The Kitchins were all for Aycock. In the election that followed the Democrats were overwhelmingly victorious.<sup>19</sup>

The methods by which the Democrats carried the election, and with it the disfranchisement amendment, in the Black Belt would not bear close scrutiny. Convinced that the blunder-crime of Reconstruction, whereby all the Negroes had been given the vote and unintelligently compacted into the Republican party, must be undone before any sort of wholesome politics could again exist in the South, they felt that the end justified the means. Hence they resorted to intimidation and trickery. In Claude's district a trick ballot-box was ingeniously devised. The votes that the Democrats wished to be counted were concealed in advance beneath a false bottom, which would spring up at the pressing of a nail and confine the ballots actually cast in a hollowed side of the box. If Negro election holders were suspicious they were either bribed or intimidated. Claude had no direct part in this, but he was aware of its existence and, like others of his party, felt that it was a justifiable expedient for redeeming the state from an intolerable situation.

With the overthrow of "fusion" Populism was virtually dead as a political organization though very

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much alive as a body of principles. With the virtual elimination of the Negro vote, the Republicans had little or no chance except in a relatively few counties. The triumphant Democracy was entrenched for years to come. But it was a different party from that of the Bourbon era. It had been born again; born of a new spirit to walk in newness of life. Chastened by the Populists for its Bourbon transgressions, assigned a penance of fasting while its opponents divided the pie, it had come to the mourners' bench and determined to get right. Not that it was sanctified yet, nor wholly purged of Bourbonism and hankerings after the flesh-pots. It was human. But in the years that followed it really brought forth fruits meet for repentance. The story of North Carolina's remarkable progress in expanding its educational system and other social agencies from Aycock on is too well known to be retold in this connection. We should be reminded, however, that tense conflicts continued within the state Democracy between the liberal, agrarian element and the conservative, business-minded group; and that the former was not always in the ascendancy, at least not wholly so.

In the famous campaign of 1900 Claude Kitchin was a candidate for Congress. Because of his winning personality, his oratorical gifts, and his wide popularity he seemed promising to many Democrats of his district, but he was rather liberal for some elements in

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the party organization. There were three other candidates for the nomination, each with considerable backing. The result was "a battle royal" in the district executive committee of his party in an all-night session on May 24-25, 1900. On the 120th ballot Claude was finally selected "after the first streaks of dawn had appeared in the east."<sup>20</sup> The election won, he was a Congressman for the rest of his life. The passing years only added to his popularity and strength. So great became the faith of his constituents in his ability and integrity that, despite differences of opinion on particular questions, he was probably as undefeatable as any Congressman in the country. And — though he was very modest about it — he knew it; hence he could afford to be independent, even if his principles had not made him so. Such a situation was an advantage which compensated in a measure for the detriments of the Solid-South Democracy.

It is difficult to describe Kitchin's personality without seeming to eulogize. Said Congressman Doughton, "The future historian will find in the life, character, and public services of Claude Kitchin a theme concerning which the simple truth will be the highest eulogy."<sup>21</sup> That he was handsome and commanding no one questioned. Six feet tall, weighing over two hundred pounds, with brown eyes and dark hair, a countenance that was always kindly and often radi-

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ant, he was admired by all who knew him, and loved by many of his associates of all shades of political belief. In fact the word "lovable," rarely used by men in describing other men, recurs with exceptional frequency in his case. "I think," said Speaker Gillett (Republican), "no one could ever come into close contact with Mr. Kitchen without coming to love him."<sup>22</sup> An imposing personality with a pleasing voice and great fluency of speech, he was quick-witted, self-possessed and consistently sincere. And utterly honorable: "No whisper of scandal ever touched him."<sup>23</sup> Even when the militant-conservative press was waging its bitterest campaigns of abuse and misrepresentation against him because of his opposition to "preparedness" and war and his position on questions of finance, it never dared question his integrity. It accused him of incompetence and bigotry, sectional rancor and general malignity, but never of dishonesty or insincerity. Those who knew him best, regardless of party, denied every item of the indictment. He was widely conceded to be the best authority in the House on questions of finance during the period of his leadership. His conspicuous ability as a debater was recognized on both sides of the House.<sup>24</sup> One of the secrets of his success was his remarkable memory for statistics, which enabled him quickly to catch the flaws in the arguments of an opponent and to shatter them with telling facts. When debates became rough-and-tumble, as they often did,



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his sparkling wit and subtle irony were of superb advantage.

On one occasion, Lenroot, a young Republican member, is said to have risen to interrupt Kitchin but to have been quickly pulled back into his seat by ex-Speaker Cannon with the rebuke: "Sit down, Lenroot! Don't you know better than to interrupt that man? He's loaded with grape and canister. Every time you touch him he scores for the Democrats." <sup>25</sup>

His frequent outbursts of satire, however devastating they may have been, were always softened by good humor. Congressman Mann, a Republican opponent, once said that a blow from Kitchin was "like a brick in a towel." <sup>26</sup> Such thrusts were usually directed against the Republican party, for Kitchin was strongly partisan. He always envisaged the Democratic party as the embodiment of his own liberal principles and thought it apostasy for any Democrat to taste of the fleshpots of reaction. The Republican party he conceived as a conspiracy of the vested interests to exploit the masses, especially the farmers. According to his view, men like La Follette simply had no business in such a party. With individual Republicans he was personally quite friendly. "The older we grow," he once said in the House, "the more softened becomes our partisan feeling. . . . Since my services here, I have met so many good Republicans that I have long since reached the conclusion that a Republican is never dangerous to a Demo-

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crat except in elections and is never harmful to the public, except in office.”<sup>27</sup>

“You used to . . . give us Republicans Hades but you always did it according to the Marquis of Queensbury rules, and woe to the Republican who would ever try to trap you when you were making a speech,” wrote a colleague in 1922. “. . . I am sure it must be a source of gratification for you to know that Members of Congress on both sides of the House . . . have universally admired your ability, your kindness of heart and your gentlemanly deportment.”<sup>28</sup>

Congressman Oldfield tells of an incident which occurred when Kitchin was interrupted in a speech by a distinguished Republican. “Will the gentleman from North Carolina yield for a question?” “Gladly,” said Kitchin with a smile, interposing a jocular side remark as to the inopportune time of the interruption. “I hope,” said the famous Republican, “the great chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, the leader of the majority in this House, will be intelligent before he is funny.” Kitchin flashed back, “I hope the gentleman from New York will be one or the other.”<sup>29</sup>

Kitchin’s virtues and imperfections alike came largely from his cultural heritage and his early environment and training. Reared in an almost exclusively agricultural community which had sorely felt the results of pro-business government, he naturally found it hard to consider with entire equanimity the problems of in-

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dustry, trade, and finance and their relations to agriculture. And yet in the years of his political maturity he seems to have been as realistic and well balanced on such questions as other liberals, or progressives. His partisanship is easily understood in the light of the bitter political strife which he witnessed from childhood on to the end of the century. His ethical code was a composite of the gay humanism of the Cavalier and the sober restraint of the Puritan. Both were derived from his ancestry and his early environment. If his forebears had been more Cavalier, his environment was probably more Puritan. For Puritanism, always more or less potent in the small-farmer-regions of the South and never quite absent in planter communities, seems to have gained renewed strength in the *post-bellum* era, even among planters of the Cavalier tradition. It was probably more dominant at Wake Forest in Claude's day than previously or subsequently. To this composite of Puritan and Cavalier traits he added all the obstinate tenacity of purpose and unyielding adherence to principles that had characterized his father. But not the "cussin'." He successfully reacted against this sin. His language was always chaste — except for occasional lapses into homely Negro aphorisms or expressive slang. He also reacted against the "Cap'm's" tendency to lose his temper. However impassioned Claude became, he always managed to preserve an even keel. Said Congressman Green of Iowa



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(Republican), "I never saw him lose control of himself under the most adverse conditions."<sup>30</sup>

"Claude Kitchin's home life," said Senator Simmons, "was ideal. He was devoted to his wife and children and they were devoted to him."<sup>31</sup> Mrs. Kitchin always remained his confidant and counselor. He never wearied her with business and professional details, but he sought her counsel when confronted with decisions of moment. To his children he was more of a pal than a paterfamilias.\* "He delighted to talk to his children," said Congressman Oldfield. "He had nine of them, of all ages, from this high [indicating] on up to grown and married, and . . . several grandchildren. I visited him at his home one night and found him on his couch, as he was ill and unable to sit up. But he was talking all the time. . . . I said to Mrs. Kitchin about 9 o'clock, 'I am going home; Claude is going to talk himself to death if I do not go.' She said, 'Please do not go, because if you do he will send for one of the children, probably the smallest one, and set her on the end of the couch and talk to her until he gets sleepy and ready to go to bed.'"<sup>32</sup>

Until 1917, Kitchin stayed at the Driscoll Hotel while Congress was in session, and between sessions at his

\* His children were as follows: Anna (Mrs. R. C. Josey); Mills (lawyer); Catherine (Mrs. L. B. Suitor); Gertrude Arrington (Mrs. J. G. Shields); Ione (died while a senior at Washington University); Claude, Jr. (lawyer); Hesta (Mrs. John R. Crawford, Jr.); Pauline (Mrs. Burwell Allen); and Stedman.

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“GALLBERRY,” HOME OF “CAP’M BUCK” AND  
BIRTHPLACE OF CLAUDE KITCHIN



HOME OF CLAUDE KITCHIN IN SCOTLAND NECK





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home in Scotland Neck. Usually Mrs. Kitchin and the smaller children stayed with him at the Driscol, while her sister, Miss Anna Mills, had charge of the home at Scotland Neck. Sometimes during short sessions he stayed in Washington alone, joining his family occasionally for week-ends. In the fall of 1917 he bought a home in Washington, and thereafter the family lived at 1412 Kennedy Street, Northwest.

Kitchin always preferred a quiet evening at home with his family to a social function, especially if the latter were formal. In fact he disliked formal gatherings heartily and usually avoided them when he could do so gracefully. Like his father, he hated the vanity and insincerity so often apparent on such occasions.

But he did enjoy an informal outing or an evening's entertainment with convivial friends, and he was usually the life of the party. Congressman "Bill" Collier enjoyed telling of an occasion when he, Claude, and two colleagues went out for a lark. After the House adjourned in the evening they decided to have dinner at a high-class restaurant in a Washington suburb. None of them had much cash in hand at the time, but they found that by pooling all their change they would have enough to cover the probable costs. The purse was turned over to Claude who was to act as host. After an epicurean evening, as lively as their Congressional dignity permitted, time came to settle the bill. Aware

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that they were not unknown to some other guests about them, each, for effect, insisted upon paying.

"Let me pay this."

"Oh, this is my treat."

"No indeed," said Collier, "I'm the host this time."

"All right, 'Bill,' " said Claude, "I believe it is your turn."

Collier was stumped for an instant but suddenly "remembered" —

"Oh! — *By the way*, Claude, I'd *forgotten* I loaned you all my change today. Remember, you were broke and I gave you that ten? I'll have to call the loan — hope you haven't spent it."

"You old fake, I knew I'd have to pay this bill." <sup>ss</sup>

During his first years as Congressman, Kitchin remained in the background. Some of his colleagues said later that they gained the impression then that he was lazy; but it turned out that he was quietly doing routine committee work, studying, observing, and thinking.<sup>ss</sup>

In 1904 he suddenly came forth with his maiden speech — a spirited attack upon the inconsistencies of Theodore Roosevelt and his party. With numbers of references to support his charge, he showed how the wheelhorses of the Republican Party had put Roosevelt upon the ticket as candidate for the Vice-Presidency in 1900, in order to shelve him. He brought evidence

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which demonstrated that Platt, Quay, and others had connived in this move, partly to humiliate McKinley. He showed that leading Republicans were chagrined when Roosevelt chanced to become President by the assassination of McKinley. They were alarmed lest he should prove too liberal. But they soon discovered that they had been unduly apprehensive, for he was not nearly as liberal in actuality, especially on economic questions, as he appeared on the surface. In Kitchin's opinion, he was just another Republican politician. Over and over, Kitchin cited Roosevelt's writings and speeches to show that he had no sympathy for farmers and industrial laborers. Among these was a quotation from T. R. in 1896: "Mr. Bryan and his adherents have appealed to the basest set in the land, the farmers." Despite the unwarranted fears of industrialists, Roosevelt could be counted upon, as shown by citations, to favor the injunction in labor disputes and to support other methods of preserving the interests of capital. He posed as a liberal, but he played the game of the Conservatives. He dramatically condemned lynching — when it occurred in the South — but in his *Winning of the West* he had said that on the Western frontier "its effect has been healthy for the community." His pet aversion was the Populist Party. He accused its members of regarding culture, refinement, and comfort as immoral. And according to his *American Ideals* "the payment of debts, like the sup-



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pression of riots [strikes] is abhorrent to the Populist mind." Yet he catered to the old Populistic element. He had also maligned the Quakers and foreign-born Americans, but later he courted their support.<sup>35</sup>

This speech of Kitchin's was widely circularized by the Democrats as one of their leading campaign tracts in 1904 — paradoxically as it now appears — in the interests of the arch-conservative, Alton B. Parker, their candidate for President.<sup>36</sup> The Democrats had made two great efforts to gain national dominance with a Populistic platform and leader, each time to be beaten by the conservative Republicans. Now the latter, by their own doings, had been brought under a leader who was feared as a sort of near-Bryan and who had actually stolen much of Bryan's thunder. It thus appeared to the leaders of the national Democracy that the best strategy for their party was to go conservative — to revert to the Cleveland tradition. Hence Parker. But the trick failed to work, because of the popularity of Roosevelt, because more Republicans than Democrats had been born, and because business was generally distrustful of the Democratic party. Meanwhile Bryanism, pushed aside at the top, was still potent in the lower reaches of the Democracy, South and West. And it staged a come-back in the leadership four years later. Claude and Will Kitchin, both in Congress, consistently maintained the position of the Bryan wing.

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In North Carolina the liberal agrarians were still in conflict with the rising business-industrial Bourbons. Since 1898, when F. M. Simmons became chairman of the State Democratic Executive Committee, a powerful organization had arisen, known as "the Simmons machine." The extent to which the machine was tied up with business interests is a controversial question; but in 1908 it backed Locke Craig, the business man's candidate, against Will Kitchen, who was ready to leave his seat in Congress to become governor on a liberal agrarian platform. Will's principles were similar to Claude's. In the recess of Congress, he and Claude stumped the State and — for the time — broke the power of the Simmons machine. Will Kitchen was nominated and elected. In January, 1909, he became governor of North Carolina.<sup>87</sup>

Many believed that the Simmons machine was as completely and permanently wrecked as "the deacon's one-hoss shay." Simmons, who came to be ironically referred to as "The Senator," was thought to be *hors de combat*, but his organization showed a remarkable resiliency. It was able to reassemble, repair, and regrease its parts; so that by 1912, when Will Kitchen ran against Simmons, The Senator was not unseated.<sup>88</sup> Will went back to his practice of law. Claude, in his district, was unbeatable; the machine knew it and let him alone.

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In 1909 Claude made a speech against the Payne-Aldrich Tariff which was widely acclaimed and which afterward won him a place on the powerful Ways and Means Committee, an appointment which later proved highly important in his own career and in the history of his country during the World War era. In this speech he ironically replied to the charge that the bill did nothing for the farmers: "To such imputations I object. In their behalf I wish to acknowledge the debt of gratitude which the farmers of this land owe to the Republican members of that committee. When the farmer scans the schedules, he will find that he has been abundantly taken care of. He will find that there have been placed upon the free list for his benefit rough diamonds, acorns, tapioca, kindling wood, English sparrows, and raw fiddle-strings." He acknowledged that the Republicans had omitted from the free list one item, rather important for farmers on holiday occasions, but he was sure they would rectify this inadvertence. The item was red lemonade.<sup>29</sup>

Then he addressed himself to the specific question under discussion, the duty on lumber. Lumber was an important interest in his district, and he was naturally besought to protect it. But he was also aware that it was used in the building of homes and other necessary structures. Besides, he was a consistent advocate of tariff-for-revenue-only. Hence, though a number of his Democratic colleagues deserted him in this matter,

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— in fact, every one of his North Carolina colleagues — he remained firm for free lumber. And he showed that the proposed bill had a joker — of which he said that Mr. Fordney, of the Ways and Means Committee, himself a big lumber man, was not unaware — whereby the tariff on lumber was apparently reduced but not actually so. Challenged for not upholding the lumber interests of his district and section, Kitchin replied:

“I have tried to make myself plain that I do not advocate a thing because it is ‘down South’ and oppose the same thing as improper or wrong because it is not ‘down South.’ [Applause.] In the matter of legislation which affects a whole people, I want to look beyond my district, beyond my state. I want to look at ninety million American people; and, sir, if the people of my district wish their representative to vote for a measure which takes, not by labor, nor for value received, but by the dry, naked law, millions of dollars from all the people and puts it into the pockets of a very few people ‘down South,’ I would say to them they ought to send here not me, not a Democrat, but a Republican. . . .”<sup>40</sup>

He showed by the testimony of a leading lumberman that, tariff or no tariff, the price of lumber would continue to rise, because of the growing demand and shrinking supply. The tariff would only accentuate the rise, and thus increase the burdens of home-builders. The profits would go mostly to a few rich syndicates which had gained possession of the bulk of the country’s

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lumber supply. The inference was clear that Mr. Fordney, one of the authors of the bill, would be among the gainers.<sup>41</sup>

He had another tilt with Fordney in February, 1911 — again over the tariff. But by this time the political tables had been turned. In the election of 1910 the country had reacted against the Payne-Aldrich Tariff, a revision upward when a downward revision had been promised, and against other reactionary measures of the Taft Administration. So the Democrats, allied with the Progressive Republicans, controlled the House in 1911. As a part of a program of piecemeal reductions, including Canadian reciprocity, the House was considering a 50 per cent reduction of the tariff on Canadian flour. Interrupted by Kitchin, Fordney parried by declaring he would offer and support an amendment to put such flour on the free list — quite contrary to his protectionist principles. Then, he acknowledged, he would fight the bill as a whole. Kitchin showed up the trickery of such a move, intended solely to increase the opposition to the bill. Fordney, obviously frustrated, replied lamely:

“Oh, wait a minute! I cannot yield my time. The gentleman is a splendid fellow, and I am very fond of him, but let me proceed a little. . . .”<sup>42</sup>

In April, 1912, when the question of a Tariff Board, “to take the tariff out of politics,” was uppermost, Kitchin was again to the fore. “When for half a cen-



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ture,” he said, . . . “our opponents were piling higher and higher the tariff taxes and burdens on the backs of the millions of American people they needed no Tariff Board; but when the free, patriotic electorate of our country, awakened by the iniquities and injustices of the Payne-Aldrich act and aroused against legislative robbery under the guise of protection, by the election of 1910 commissioned this Congress to reduce these taxes and remove these burdens, from that moment to this, from the throats of every standpat Republican and every tariff-enriched baron throughout the country went up the cry, ‘Tariff Board! Tariff Board!’ ”

To the claims that such a board could be unbiased and non-partisan, he replied: “I want to say to you, gentlemen, that you will never take the tariff out of politics as long as the Republican party is determined to serve the trusts and manufacturers and let them write the tariff laws of this country to enable them to plunder the American people. Never since 1816 has the tariff been out of politics except in 1846, when the Democracy of the nation, here in this Capitol, had the patriotism and courage to enact, in the face of the prophecies of ruin and disaster made by manufacturers, the Walker Act. In spite of the appeals and threats and bullyings of the special interests whose agents had gathered here from every quarter of the country, it dared to write into the law the principle that a tariff tax should be levied only for the purpose of revenue for



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the Government with the least burden to the people. Under its beneficent operations the country prospered as never before or since. In the decade that followed, manufacturing interests doubled and the wealth of the country more than doubled. . . . Gentlemen, we are not going to let you take the tariff out of politics until a law is again written upon the statute books that every dollar that is levied under the tariff shall be levied for the purpose of the Government only, and not a dollar shall be exacted from the people for the manufacturer's tribute." The Tariff Board already established, with advisory powers, had not been unbiased, he said, and no other one could be so unless the anti-protectionist principle were definitely established.<sup>43</sup>

In the summer of 1912, when the division in Republican ranks made possible the election of a Democratic President and Congress, both Claude and Will Kitchin came out for Woodrow Wilson as apparently the most liberal candidate in the field for the Presidency. In their state convention they fought a winning fight against the Simmons machine and instructed the North Carolina delegation to vote for Wilson—a partial compensation for Will Kitchin's failure to capture The Senator's seat.<sup>44</sup>

The election of Wilson was a joyful event in the life of Claude Kitchin. He had an almost naïve faith in this prophet of the New Freedom. Wilson talked so ration-

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ally. He seemed so wise — and so socially minded.

With most of the policies of Wilson's first biennium Kitchin was in hearty accord. He favored the Underwood Tariff in so far as it called for revision downward, also the graduated income tax and the laws for the regulation of business enterprises. But on several occasions he found himself at variance with the Administration, and he was about as obstinate as Wilson when he felt that principles or vital policies were at stake. He opposed the three per cent tax on railway freight urged by Underwood in 1914 and backed by the Administration, favoring, instead, higher taxes on incomes and spirituous liquors. He opposed the President's move to abrogate free use of the Panama Canal by American coastwise vessels; not only because this privilege tended to stimulate the growth of a greatly needed merchant marine, but also because it encouraged a desirable competition with transcontinental railways. He favored, in general, Wilson's policies with reference to Mexico but was quite opposed to intervention.<sup>45</sup>

As early as the autumn of 1914, and more especially in 1915, it was rumored that Kitchin's standing at the White House was not of the best. Whatever truth there may have been in this, it was evidently exaggerated by the press, as will later appear. Although their personal contacts were infrequent, Wilson was cordial toward Kitchin when they met, respected his judgment, and admired his sincerity. It is evident, on the other hand,

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that Kitchin still admired Wilson, agreed with him more often than not, and retained great faith in his ability and on the whole, in his ideals.<sup>46</sup>

In the election of 1914, Oscar Underwood, who had been chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means and majority leader in the House of Representatives, was elected to the Senate. If the seniority rule were followed, Kitchin was now in line for the dual position which the Senator-elect from Alabama was thus to vacate — a position widely regarded as second in power to that of the Presidency. But in view of the fact that Claude was not always in harmony with the Administration, the question was raised, especially by papers hostile to him, whether his colleagues would or should support him for so important a post. The seniority rule was not inflexible; it had been broken before. Underwood had consistently supported Administration policies; Kitchin had not, and doubtless would not in the future. More important, perhaps, the conservative press did not like him. He was too much of a free-trader, too much of an agrarian, too anti-militaristic, and, withal, entirely too self-willed to be teamed with Wilson. The controversy which began as early as the autumn of 1913, when Underwood's senatorial ambitions became known, continued intermittently thereafter.<sup>47</sup>

If a man is to be judged by the enemies he makes, it may be interesting to note a few samples of the opposition to Kitchin at that time. A. Mitchell Palmer,

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whose standing among Liberals was none too high, and Luke Lea, who as a financier played loose and fast with other people's money and who was later sentenced to long imprisonment in connection with banking scandals, were among those most unfriendly to Kitchin.<sup>48</sup> Conservative and reactionary papers throughout the country, in so far as they gave any attention to him at the time, were increasingly opposed to his elevation to the leadership.

Here is an excellent example of press propaganda: The *Saturday Evening Post* in its issue of February 28, 1914, wrote him up — or, rather, “wrote him *down*,” in the language of the newspaper office — in its department of “Who's Who and Why.” He was humorously, ridiculously pictured as an obstinate, cantankerous nonentity. The writer took his text from James Russell Lowell: “The only argument available with an east wind is to put on your overcoat.” This was paraphrased: “The only argument available with Claude Kitchin is to put on your earmuffs.”

“A disputatious person is Kitchin,” the article continued, “prone to present his side of the case on all occasions; and no case was ever known or imagined wherein or whereat there was not a distinctly Kitchin side; for he has pronounced views on all subjects and pronounces those views with or without permission, as the case may be — but always pronounces them.

“Of course he is not arrogant about it or supercilious.

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All he does, when a subject comes up for consideration, is to say:

“ ‘My dear sir, you are entirely wrong. As a matter of fact the situation is exactly the reverse. As you stated your proposition you allege that the sum total of two and two is four. Now, as I shall show you — seeking as best I may to conceal my infinite pity for your fathomless ignorance of the matter in hand — the sum of two and two is not four. The sum of two and two is five.’

“ ‘Well,’ you concede in order to maintain peace even at the price of arithmetic, ‘let it go at that. The sum of two and two is — as you so illuminatingly state — five.’

“ ‘Wrong!’ Kitchen will shout. ‘I am amazed at the feebleness and futility of your reasoning. Have you no mental processes worthy of the name? Does logic make no appeal to you? Is your mind so benighted, turbid, obnubilated, obfuscated and imperscrutable as not to comprehend the simple truth of the statement that the sum of two and two is three? And, sir, having made this assertion, and despite your cowardly attempt to escape the consequence of your rash surrender wherein you sought to agree with a mere tentative proposition of mine, I am now prepared to argue and shall insist on so arguing this matter with you to a logical conclusion, and show you the error into which you have fallen. . . .’ ”



## A SON OF THE OLD SOUTH

There was much more of the same tenor, including a reputed argument with Ollie James over a casual statement of the latter that the cigar he was smoking was a fine Havana. Kitchin was said to have gone through a similarly ridiculous and imbecile meandering.

It was powerful propaganda because of its very subtlety — the sort that would convince the man in the street of Kitchin's utter incompetence more readily than bitter invective, for the latter would be more likely to be suspected of bias. Yet any one who knew Kitchin or studied his record would have known that it was not even legitimate caricature. "I never knew a man," said President Wilson, "who could state his position more lucidly or state yours more fairly." <sup>49</sup> Tumulty tells of a conference in his presence in which Kitchin, by cold logic, convinced Wilson on a question concerning which they had strongly disagreed. "Having driven the President from point to point, Mr. Kitchin was the victor. . . . The President literally threw up his hands and said: . . . 'I surrender, Mr. Kitchin, you have beaten me. I shall inform my friends on the Hill that I was mistaken and shall instruct them, of course, to follow you in the matter.' " <sup>50</sup> In the House, he rarely took the floor, but when he did, as John Temple Graves observed, "every speech has been a rifle-shot that rang round the chamber and made the *Record* radiant with life and vigor." <sup>51</sup> He was loquacious in private conversation, and was said to have exerted his greatest in-

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fluence in the cloak room; but, so far as the records indicate, no one who really knew him ever accused him of absurdities remotely resembling those indicated in the *Post* article.

In December, 1914, there were rumors in the Eastern press that Wilson would oppose the election of Kitchin to the leadership, "because he had shown an independence of Administration influence" — at once denied from the White House.<sup>62</sup> In the following February he was unanimously chosen by the Democratic caucus for the dual position which Underwood held. This was only an expression of preference, to be sure, and might not be ratified by the new Congress to convene in December. But it left little doubt in the matter, and Kitchin properly assumed the virtual leadership in the interim. In the minds of certain editors and news writers, the wish was father to recurrent rumors that he might still be headed off. For in the summer and autumn that followed, Kitchin and Wilson drifted farther apart than ever before, and on questions with reference to which the conservative press of both parties was strongly aligned against "the would-be leader from Scotland Neck." Stormy times were ahead for Claude Kitchin.

## CHAPTER II

### FIGHTING "JINGOES AND WAR TRAFFICKERS"

THE most vital issues on which Claude Kitchin came to grips with the Wilson Administration arose from the World War. Kitchin held that the Wilson policies were unneutral from the start and tended increasingly to draw us into the maelstrom. He was aware that the war was a struggle for dominion among European Powers, and he firmly held that it was not our quarrel and should not be made our fight. Both sides, with no hostile intentions toward us, impinged upon our "rights." Great Britain daily violated them in her unlawful "blockade" of Germany. We knew that she was not aiming at us and we accepted her "blockade," unlawful though we knew it to be. Germany's "blockade," equally unlawful and likewise impersonal, we challenged with threats of war, and we finally were faced with the fulfillment of the threats. If Britain sank no American ships and destroyed no American lives, it was because we submitted to her dictates. When Germany, solemnly threatened, yielded on the submarine issue, demanding in return that we seek to compel her enemies

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to discontinue their unlawful practices, we told her in effect — very illogically — that it was none of her business what we did about her enemies. We continued to tolerate the sins of the Allies with scarcely an audible protest and to increase the severity of our demands upon the Central Powers. We permitted our profiteers to wax fat in their trade with one side, and we took our jingoes entirely too seriously. Meanwhile, there was many a “nigger in the woodpile.” This, in essence, was Kitchin’s indictment of Wilson’s war policies.

What would he have done instead? Early in the war he would have used the diplomatic weapons afforded by the strength of our position in insistent, but not bellicose, efforts to force the belligerents to mollify the severity of their blockade policies. A threatened embargo on munitions, he believed, would have brought Great Britain to terms. In that case Germany would have been more amenable to reason in the matter of submarine warfare. Above all, he would have been equally firm with both sides, but would have threatened neither with war. By February, 1916, when the situation with reference to Germany became more grave, he favored an actual embargo and said that large majorities in both Houses of Congress favored such a move but were restrained by the Administration. He would at least have warned Americans against traveling upon the armed vessels of belligerents and have left those who insisted upon doing so to travel at their own



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risk. He continued thereafter to believe that "we could and should have kept out of this war."<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary to have in mind Kitchin's position with reference to neutrality in order to interpret properly his position on the question of "preparedness," which occasioned his first major breach with the White House. In opposing the movement for militarization — for which he recognized the term "preparedness" as a euphemism — he was thinking in terms of defense. An offensive war to help redraw the world's political map for European Powers was to him entirely abhorrent.

In the summer of 1915 it began to be rumored that Wilson was about to succumb to "the Roosevelt militarists and the preparers of preparedness." He had formerly opposed any abnormal increase in our military establishments, in accordance with the traditional position of his party, and had firmly adhered to this course since the outbreak of hostilities despite the clamors of professional militarists, bellicose politicians, and grasping profiteers. Such a course had seemed politically wise, at least for a time, for he had been hailed as the champion of peace by a country preponderantly pacific. But by the summer of 1915 the agitation for "preparedness," lavishly financed by "war-traffickers" and assiduously exploited by Republican politicians, had become politically alarming to its opponents. The militaristic propaganda not only appealed to those bel-



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ligerently inclined, but also swept many thousands into line with the time-worn delusion that preparedness was "not *for* war but *against* war." If we were properly prepared, not even a victorious Germany would dare attack us; otherwise, dire were the prophecies as to what would happen when the Central Powers should have crushed the Allies and turned to world conquest.

In general, the element favoring preparedness swallowed the Allied propaganda, hook, line and sinker, and hence was violently anti-German. It pictured the Allies as innocent lambs attacked by the big, bad wolf of German militarism. It credited every "atrocious" lie that the British Foreign Office and the Northcliffe press sought to propagate. It easily envisaged the destruction of our ports and the devastation of our land by German "frightfulness" — made plausible by the arch munitioneer, Hudson Maxim, in his widely distributed book, *Defenseless America*,\* and in the screen version of it, the *Battle Cry of Peace*. No more specious propaganda was ever broadcast. But it served its purpose. Along with other such rantings, it scared millions into accepting its moral: to remain "unprepared" was to invite disaster; to give our militarists and munitions makers a free hand was to insure perpetual peace.

It was further argued that if "prepared" we could make more effective use of our diplomatic weapons. We

\* The book was spread broadcast in cheap editions and complimentary copies.

FIGHTING "JINGOES AND WAR TRAFFICKERS" could force both sides — with the emphasis on Germany — to mitigate their blockade policies and respect our neutral rights. The consequent enlargement of our trade opportunities would promote increasing prosperity.

Such arguments were reinforced by the emotional drive of a rising spirit of militancy. The tremendous excitement aroused by the war demanded an outlet. Some found it in the insane activities of the Ku Klux Klan (revived in 1915), others in the martial tread of preparedness parades. William Lyon Phelps characterized the situation under the title the *Dance of Death*:<sup>2</sup>

"Very few persons can see a dance without wishing to participate. The whirling figures develop a centrifugal force that pulls the spectators. Perhaps this is one reason why the dance of death that has been shaking the floor of the Continent [of Europe] for over a year is constantly becoming more alluring to Americans. For there can be no doubt that the 'war spirit' is steadily growing in this country. It has been sedulously fostered by many newspapers, by persons who are after political or commercial capital, and by the sentimental slogan, 'preparedness.' . . .

"The terrible dance of death, played with appropriate music, with plenty of bands, plenty of substitute dancers, goes along swiftly. There are many new figures never seen before. Whole nations have been preparing for it so long, under the most capable masters, and

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with frequent rehearsals, that we now behold the greatest military ball in history.

“Signs are multiplying in America of a general desire that we too may learn this dance. Many young Americans are already trying the steps, and are praised for their proficiency; the dancing masters are busy, and it is probable that when Congress opens . . . huge appropriations will be made, so that every one can learn the dance of death. . . .”

Many who approved the slogan “preparedness *against* war” and expected only a grand “rehearsal” found emotional compensation for our absence from the “dance” — little realizing that such “rehearsal” was an almost certain prelude to the carnival of blood.

The most conspicuous leader of the movement was ex-Rough Rider and ex-President Theodore Roosevelt. Bellicose wielder of the “big stick,” he was exasperated at the “pacifism” and “cowardice” of the “impractical professor in the White House”; and he minced no words in revealing his sentiments to the public. Next was the ranking military officer of the country, General Leonard Wood, whose exalted position as Chief of Staff (to 1914) and then (to 1917) Commander of the Eastern Division had not been an altogether happy one under a Democratic, pacific Administration. As harshly critical of Wilson as was Roosevelt, he was promoting preparedness by privately financed Citizens’ Training Camps, with no sanction at first from the Government,

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and was eager to lead an expeditionary force overseas to the aid of the Allies. In the Senate the preparedness forces were headed by the militant Republican leader, Henry Cabot Lodge; in the House his counterpart was A. P. Gardner. Both were from the New England center of the munitions industry.

While the Republicans were preponderantly militarist and the Democrats pacific, there were notable exceptions on both sides. Even in the President's official family, Lindley M. Garrison, Secretary of War, and David F. Houston, Secretary of Agriculture, were ardent advocates of preparedness. More important, the President's most intimate unofficial adviser, Colonel E. M. House, for a time Wilson's "*alter ego*," was urging approval of the movement — strangely enough, with the promptings of General Wood. On the other hand, a group of progressive Republicans such as La Follette, Norris, and Borah opposed the movement.

The propaganda was furthered by various "patriotic" organizations. Among these was the Navy League, sponsored by J. P. Morgan and his partners, Thomas W. Lamont, William H. Porter, Henry P. Davidson, and Charles Steel; as well as by Paul Cravath of Westinghouse, Elbert H. Gary of U. S. Steel, Cornelius Vanderbilt and Ogden Mills of Lackawanna Steel, Robert M. Thompson and S. H. Pell of International Nickel, and others for whom preparedness held the lure of huge profits. There was also the National Security

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League, especially interested in promoting increases in the army. It was fostered by Theodore Roosevelt; by Robert Bacon of the House of Morgan; by Solomon Stanwood Mencken, attorney and lobbyist for large vested interests; by Frederick Coudert, legal adviser of the Allies; by Henry L. Stimson, James M. Beck, Myron T. Herrick, George H. Putnam, and by other pro-Ally propagandists. To these organizations was added in August, 1915, the American Defense Society, similarly fostered and, if possible, even more fervid. Through the various media of propaganda, these groups, with unlimited resources, aroused among some elements of the population, mainly in the East, a veritable mania for preparedness.

At the time of Wilson's conversion to the movement, however, the mania was apparently more uproarious than widespread, more heralded than followed. Then why did he change? Whether with the rise of the submarine controversy he became aware that his policies were leading almost inevitably to war, and therefore wished to prepare the country for it, physically and psychically, or whether he merely thought of war as a possibility, it is evident that political exigencies played a large part in producing his change of front. Whatever actual voting strength "preparedness" had gained, its latent possibilities seemed a menace to an Administration which might dare to oppose it against the clamors of a rival party. It was safer to yield.



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So in July, 1915, the President sent "almost identical letters to the Secretaries of War and of the Navy." To Mr. Daniels of the Navy Department, he wrote:<sup>8</sup>

"I have been giving, as I am sure you have also, a great deal of thought to the matter of a wise and adequate naval programme to be proposed to the Congress at its next session, and I would like to discuss the whole subject with you at the earliest possible date.

"But first we must have professional advice. I would be very much obliged to you if you would get the best minds in the department to work on the subject. I mean the men who have been most directly in contact with actual modern conditions, who have most thoroughly comprehended what the Navy must be in the future in order to stand upon an equality with the most efficient and most practically serviceable. I want their advice, a programme by them formulated in the most definite way. Whether we can reasonably propose the whole of it to the Congress immediately or not we can determine when we have studied it. The important thing now is to know fully what we need. Congress will certainly welcome such advice and follow it to the limit of its opportunity.

"It should be a programme planned for a consistent and progressive development of this great defensive arm of the nation and should be of such a kind as to commend itself to every patriotic and practical man. . . ."

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Was the President correct in assuming that Congress would "certainly welcome such advice"?

The first reference in Kitchin's correspondence to the impending struggle appears in a letter from one of his closest friends, Representative Warren Worth Bailey of Pennsylvania. Having sensed the rumors of Wilson's change of heart, Bailey wrote on July 29, 1915:

"Apparently we are to have another round with the big navy crowd at the coming session; and I am wondering whether those who voted against two battleships in the last session have undergone a change of heart and are now ready to go along on the proposition of four dreadnaughts, fifty submarines, a lot of cruisers, torpedo boats, torpedo boat destroyers, airships and all the rest; also whether an army of five hundred thousand is appealing to them and their constituents.

"It is a big proposition we are facing and naturally I am interested in the probable outcome, although how others stand will not affect my position, as I am just as firmly opposed to military and naval expansion now as I was during the last session and shall unhesitatingly fight every jingoistic scheme that may come up, no matter with what endorsement. . . ."

To this Kitchin replied on August 3:

"I think of all times in the world we can now consider our naval and military policy with coolness and without haste. We can wait even for the termination of the

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present war before we make any substantial expansion or change in our policy. Every European country has its hands full and none could spare a ship or a soldier to send against us. I trust Congress will not lose its head and go in with the jingoes and the ammunition and war equipment interests to pile millions of additional burdens upon our people. However, I fear it is going to do so, and I fear, too, the Administration is going to lend its support to a big military-naval propaganda. I am against the four dreadnaughts and the five hundred thousand army program. However, I believe I favor building more submarines and destroyers and enlarging our capacity to lay mines. I think the latter is wise and most probably necessary as a pure defensive measure.”

In the weeks that followed he wrote to the same effect to other correspondents, adding that when the war was over every belligerent would be “so exhausted in men, money, credit and material resources, and its people so burdened with debt and taxation” that none could think of attacking us for years to come. Our menace came not from abroad but from our own militarists, “headed by Roosevelt,” and from the “war traffickers,” interested solely in “profits to themselves.”<sup>4</sup>

On August 13 the press of the country announced that Secretaries Garrison and Daniels, of the War and Navy Departments respectively, had presented their plans for “national defense” to the President and that he was “studying” them. These plans were not published

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in detail but their general character was forecast, calling for huge increases in our military-naval establishments which could hardly be justified except on a basis of a contemplated war of offense rather than defense. This fact was obvious to Kitchin and was very upsetting to him.

It was not his intention, he said, to make any public attack upon the Administration's apparent change of heart until the issue was more clearly and authoritatively drawn, but, two weeks after the announcement about the new programs of Garrison and Daniels, garbled versions of his position began appearing in the press without his authorization. It all began when a friendly reporter for a friendly paper misinterpreted and over-elaborated a few remarks made in a supposedly private conversation, and when he, or the printers, permitted a serious typographical error to creep into the article.<sup>5</sup>

"I was just on the point of leaving Washington," wrote Kitchin, "when Parker Anderson, reporter for the *Greensboro News*, whom I know very well personally, happened to come up and ask me how about my position on the big Navy and Army program. I had only two or three minutes with him. I didn't know it would get into the papers, but simply thought he was asking me personally my views."<sup>6</sup>

This was a scoop that a newspaperman could hardly resist. The new Democratic leader in the House would



FIGHTING "JINGOES AND WAR TRAFFICKERS" fight the Administration's paramount program! If Anderson muddled a few brief statements hurriedly made, filled in the gaps with his reportorial imagination, and spread out a feature article; if his memory or his typewriter twisted figures rather badly, there was no malicious intent. For not only was he a friend of Kitchin's but his paper, the Greensboro (N.C.) *Daily News*, was one of the most liberal dailies in the country at that time and was rather consistently in accord with the policies of the new majority leader. But the damage was done. The basis was laid for a growing propaganda in the militant press to discredit "this would-be leader from Scotland Neck."

The feature article in the Greensboro *Daily News* on August 27 was headed: "VIEWS DIVERGE BETWEEN SECRETARY DANIELS AND REPRESENTATIVE KITCHIN — *House Leader Thinks Submarines Are All That Country Needs — Does Not Favor Battleships of Dreadnaught Type — Calls Secretary's Hand. . . .*" Kitchin "created a mild sensation here today when he declared that not a dollar of government money would be voted for battleships of the dreadnaught type during the coming session of Congress unless it was accomplished without his consent. . . ." And so on for a column and a half. He would oppose any appropriations for national defense above \$10,000,000 (*sic*).

It seems that scarcely a point in the entire article was accurately reported. According to Kitchin no men-

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tion was made of Secretary Daniels. He had neither said nor thought that submarines were all that the country needed. For years he had voted for an established program of one new dreadnaught each year and would *probably* do so again, though he was inclined to think it would be wiser to concentrate upon smaller craft and coast defenses. He had long held, as a member of the Naval Committee, that relatively more attention should be given to smaller craft, especially submarines and destroyers; also to mine-laying equipment and to aircraft. "The war has certainly demonstrated the wisdom of this position," he said; for no troops had been landed upon German soil, thus equipped, despite the vast superiority of the Allies in battleships. So what he had said, apparently, was that he opposed spending another dollar for dreadnaughts beyond the formerly established program.\* "Of course I never said, as quoted in the press throughout the country, that less than ten million dollars would be appropriated for national defense in the next Congress, when I have been voting for many millions more every Congress. This, of course, was an error in the printing." He explained that for several years he had supported annual appropriations for the navy of well over a hundred million dollars, and about that amount for the army. Taking his approximate figures for *each* branch of the service, dropping off a

\* The preceding Congress had increased the program from one to two, against his opposition.

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zero, and making the result apply to *both* branches, it was easy to put him in a ridiculous light, and evidently many papers were not averse to doing so.<sup>7</sup>

As further evidence that the big-navy brand of preparedness was unnecessary, Kitchin asserted that our naval strength was already second only to that of Great Britain. On this point his "ignorance" was "exposed" by the Navy League through the columns of its organ, *The Seven Seas*, by means of references to *The Navy Year-Book*. He replied in a statement to the press of North Carolina: "Notwithstanding the metropolitan press, magazine writers, the 'patriotic societies' and our *Navy Year-Book* (which was exposed in the last Congress, and will be so exposed in the next, as unreliable and misleading), *the fact is that we have, built and building, the strongest and most powerful navy in the world except that of Great Britain.*" He quoted Admiral Fletcher's testimony to that effect at the naval hearings of the preceding session and his statement that our navy could successfully resist that of Germany; also the testimony of Captain Winterhalter, a naval expert who had said, "Judge Witherspoon has proved that our navy is superior to that of Germany and I agree with him." As to *The Navy Year-Book*, he showed how it juggled figures — counted numbers of obsolete or obsolescent vessels in listing the navies of Germany and other countries but omitted them in our case; counted certain German and other foreign battle-

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ships, building or provided for, but omitted similar ones for the United States; and thus made our Navy appear inferior. So *The Year-Book* was evidently loaded with propaganda.<sup>8</sup>

If the navalists and militarists were thinking in terms of offensive war, Kitchin was sure that the great majority in the country and in Congress were not; and he seems to have been equally sure at that time that the President was not. So, presuming that we were not out for aggression or for dictating the settlement of European quarrels, how great was the danger of our being attacked? The childish fears of a "wicked" Germany, triumphant at last over the Allied armies and navies and still able to conquer and annex the United States, belonged to the nursery, he said, but these fears were actually invoked by selfish propagandists.<sup>9</sup>

"I have been somewhat surprised at the position of John Sharpe Williams," he wrote. "His reference to what Germany might do to us seems more like a pretext for his present position. He is too sensible a man, unless he is convulsed with fear, to really believe there is any possibility of such. However, he may be taking counsel of his fears and, like the child in the nursery, his judgment is impaired by war goblins."<sup>10</sup>

The big-navy men overstated their case, he said. Their argument was a boomerang. If Germany, with greatly inferior strength in battleships, could triumph over the combined navies of the Allies by means of



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small craft, then battleships were highly undependable. "In one breath, to convince us that we should have a big navy of dreadnaughts, etc., they point to Great Britain's control of the seas; how with her immense dreadnaughts, she swept the German fleet and German commerce off the seas, and in the next breath, to alarm us, they say that Germany might, with a little navy of one-third as large as that of Great Britain, crush the British fleet and come right over, conquer the United States, and make us all German subjects, and such stuff *ad nauseam*. . . ." <sup>11</sup>

As to the army, the only possible excuse for its immediate increase was a contemplated war of aggression. Garrison's plan for a "citizen army" was especially objectionable. It smacked too much of "Prussian militarism." Four hundred thousand youths would be required to serve in army training camps for two months each year for three years and to be subject to call for three years thereafter. In addition, the regular army was to be increased to one hundred and forty thousand and the militia to one hundred and twenty-five thousand; so that the peace-time footing would soon amount to six hundred and sixty-five thousand, with a swelling army of reserves. <sup>12</sup>

This, along with four dreadnaughts per year and large numbers of cruisers, seemed ominously like the sort of thing that was now showing its fruits in Europe. "If this program goes through," said Kitchin, "it will

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no longer be a question of whether we *may* become a nation given over to navalism and militarism, but we *shall* have become one.”<sup>13</sup> Such militarization, he held, would stir the martial spirit of our people, heighten their sensitiveness to unintended injuries, endanger our pacific purposes and our democratic institutions. It would also arouse the fear and hostility of possible foes, increase the danger of our embroilment, and tend to perpetuate the armament race when the war was over.<sup>14</sup>

He held, moreover, that the movement had arisen out of avarice and vainglory. The “so-called patriotic societies” which were financing it and “whooping it up,” he said, were supported by the directors of huge profiteering corporations, by high officers in the army and navy, and by their blatant political advocates. Millions in profits were in prospect, promotions to admiralships and generalships, and perhaps political ascendancy. So naturally these men were strong for preparedness.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, the program would be enormously costly. “The President’s program demands,” he said, “that at one bound we shall increase our already immense naval expenditure by more than the total increase during the last fourteen years, by more than the total naval increase of Germany during the five years preceding the European War, by more than the combined naval increase of all the nations of the world in any one year in their history.”<sup>16</sup> This would demand a huge increase



CARTOON BY BERRYMAN IN *Washington Star*.

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in taxes. Who would pay these taxes? Would the "patriots" who were most to profit by the program be equally patriotic when time came to pay for it? Kitchin predicted with the accuracy of an Elijah — though it didn't take an Elijah to do it — that these would be the loudest to protest against paying their share when the time came.<sup>17</sup>

It was not surprising that Kitchin's position, or a distorted version of it, was widely denounced by the militant press. Even in his own state a large proportion of the papers condemned his position and some were severely critical of him. In the main, his efforts to get misrepresentations corrected were in vain.<sup>18</sup>

As partial compensation for such widespread distortion and abuse, he had numbers of letters from colleagues and friends praising his courageous stand. "Am glad to see you quoted against big appropriations for preparedness," wrote W. J. Bryan . . . "You have stated the case very strongly."<sup>19</sup> "Delighted," wrote Congressman E. W. Saunders . . . "It was the first clear note of sanity that I have read in the noisy mouth-ing and silly fanfaronade. . . ." <sup>20</sup> "You have acted just as I expected you to," assured Congressman E. Y. Webb, "and that is, not losing your head amidst all the frenzy attempted to be stirred up by selfish interests in the United States."<sup>21</sup> "It takes a rare degree of courage," said the Rev. J. Henry Scattergood, "for a Congressman to stand up at this time when this armament



FIGHTING "JINGOES AND WAR TRAFFICKERS" craze is sweeping the country." <sup>22</sup> David Starr Jordan predicted that Kitchin's "noble campaign is sure to meet the approval of history and the next generation, even if you should be temporarily beaten now." <sup>23</sup> When Chief Justice Walter Clark of the North Carolina Supreme Court, an outstanding liberal, read of Kitchin's position, he wrote to him: "At one bound it has placed you 'at the head of the procession,' as one of the foremost men of the nation." <sup>24</sup> Professor H. R. Mussey of Columbia University confirmed Kitchin's opinion that the Eastern press was not representative of the country and approved his stand against the "heedless acceptance of the militant argument." <sup>25</sup> Oswald Garrison Villard, then editor of the New York *Evening Post*, wrote that he had heard from a newspaper friend "that the Administration has not got its heart in this program and only went into it 'in order to save itself from being wiped off the map!'" <sup>26</sup> Villard enclosed a copy of a letter from Senator William E. Borah, saying, "I begin to believe that we are losing our heads over the subject. I am certainly opposed to a large standing army." H. Q. Alexander, President of the North Carolina Farmers' Union, said that the President had advanced no reason "for his radical change of our national policy" and was apparently trying to usurp the powers of an elected Congress. <sup>27</sup> But perhaps the movement had an even more insidious purpose. One of the main objectives of the preparedness backers, in the opinion of one correspond-

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ent, was to militarize the country against the rising labor element.<sup>28</sup>

When it was definitely announced in October that Wilson would support the "preparedness" program, Kitchin wrote William J. Bryan:<sup>29</sup>

"I am brokenhearted over the position which the President has taken with regard to 'preparedness.' I am sorely disappointed. To save my life I cannot see how he, or anyone, can reconcile the position which he took in his message of December, 1914, and his May 10, 1915, speech at Philadelphia with the position which he now takes. To his December message I give unstinted applause and approval. He was then cool, . . . as he was then describing the Gardners, Hobsons, and other jingoes. It seems now that he has become 'nervous and excited' — and frightened — why and for what purpose I leave to the imagination. Anyway, it seems that the war goblins and jingoes have caught him. The present attitude of the President, so surprising and disappointing, has worried me more than anything in my political life. I have seen members of the House throw away their convictions so often to please him that I can conjure up no reason to hope that his program can be defeated, though I shall try my best. If the President had taken no stand one way or the other, but would leave it to the judgment of Congress, there would be no trouble in defeating such a program, or any in-

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crease in appropriations for armaments. . . ." Kitchin wrote a number of others to the same effect. "I am embarrassed exceedingly that I cannot conscientiously support some of the President's policies. . . ." <sup>80</sup> But it was Wilson who had changed, and he could give no good reason for his change. The majority in Congress, at least at heart, Kitchin was sure, still stood on the Democratic platform and principles, where Wilson had formerly stood. But how long would they continue to stand there when the Administration applied its pressure? And how embarrassing might the situation become for himself as majority leader?

"Between us," he wrote Victor Murdock,\* "I have many misgivings as to the success of my leadership in the coming Congress. I would anticipate no trouble and am confident I could hold 'the boys' together all right if, as in the 62d. Congress, we were free to act according to our own judgment and control our own actions, or if I were so constituted that I could throw up my hat and hurrah for anything 'our President' wants to advocate, because he wants or advocates it. If I could do the latter I would have a 'cinch' as leader and enjoy the happiness of many a Presidential smile, and the bowings and 'sashayings' of departmental 'flunkies' would be a joy forever. But, as the darkey would say, 'I ain't built that way'. . . ." <sup>81</sup>

\* A former Republican Congressman, then Chairman of the Naval Committee of the Progressive party. From their correspondence it appears that he and Kitchin were close friends.

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It turned out that Kitchin was unduly pessimistic at that time as to the ease with which the Administration would be able to subdue his anti-preparedness colleagues. From numbers of these, and from other friends to whom he had written of his fears, he had reassuring and encouraging letters. "Quit admitting that 'preparedness' has won," wrote R. N. Page, a colleague from North Carolina. "The majority of the people are against it" and the majority in Congress, he believed, would be steadfast in its opposition. He knew, for example, that Webb and Doughton, colleagues from their state, would stand by them.<sup>32</sup> (R. N. Page was a brother of Ambassador Walter Hines Page, but the two were poles apart in their views as to the war.) Further reassurance came from Bryan. "The only thing I object to in your letter is the statement that you think the jingoes will win out in Congress. I would not admit that. I find a very strong sentiment against any increased expenditures on the army and navy, and as the facts are all on our side, I have faith that we shall be able to prevent extravagance."<sup>33</sup> Warren Worth Bailey had letters from numbers of Congressmen, he said, almost all of whom "pooh-poohed" Wilson's "fears."<sup>34</sup> By the opening of Congress in December, 1915, Kitchin was hopeful that the program could be defeated, or at least greatly modified.<sup>35</sup>

James Hay advised caution in the make-up of the Committee on Military Affairs, of which he was chair-



FIGHTING "JINGOES AND WAR TRAFFICKERS" man.<sup>36</sup> "If a committee is appointed which I cannot control I shall be powerless to keep down appropriations." Bailey also advised that both the military and naval committees be "unpacked." William Schley Howard, a member from Georgia, wrote that hundreds of millions might be saved if no member were put upon either of these committees in whose district there was a navy yard, arsenal, or military post.<sup>37</sup>

To Kitchin this question of packing or "unpacking" committees was obviously a delicate one. Earlier in the controversy he had accepted the view, mistakenly perhaps, that his opposition to the President's program should be as a member and not as majority leader. That it was the right and duty of the Democrats in Congress to stand by their principles regardless of the Administration's change of course, he had no doubt, though such right was widely denied by the militant press. But since the President, after all, was the titular head of his party, was it altogether proper or good policy for the official party leader of one branch of the government formally to lead the opposition to the Administration? He had resolved his doubts on this point in the negative, perhaps too soon.<sup>38</sup> As he had more influence with his group than any other member, and was looked to as the natural leader, he could not really escape the actual leadership when the question arose. His later turning of the floor leadership over to some other member when differences between him and the President reached a

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crisis seemed more of a gesture to public opinion and to his own conscience than anything else. But what to do about these committees? He was rather non-committal in his replies to the above-mentioned letters. He would consult with the chairman of those committees and with other members.<sup>39</sup>

And what of his relations with the Administration? Did he harbor any personal animus against Wilson, Daniels, and others of the group, as some suspected? The evidence is strongly to the contrary. In the very breath in which he condemned the President's new policies, in confidential correspondence, he said that he was all the more disappointed because Wilson "in my judgment (though I have differed with him on some propositions) has made the best President since the Civil War." <sup>40</sup> Privately and publicly he maintained that they were on personally friendly terms and that each respected the sincerity of the other.

True, the President was rather late in calling the majority leader into conference.<sup>41</sup> Not until after the press had definitely announced his position did he make such a move. On October 27, Wilson wrote:

"It was a great disappointment to me that you could not see me when you were in town yesterday or today. I consider it of the utmost importance that I should discuss with you the question of preparation for national defense which will necessarily engage the at-

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tention of Congress immediately upon its assembling,  
and I write now to beg you will give me the pleasure of  
consulting with you at the earliest possible date. . . ."

The conference was arranged for November 8th.  
All sorts of wild rumors were spread with reference to  
it. But Kitchin wrote an intimate friend: <sup>42</sup>

"In spite of a lot of jingo papers, I had a most  
pleasant and cordial interview with the President; I  
worked the whole matter out with him, telling him  
plainly that he had been badly advised by his military  
and naval experts; that he had been imposed upon, and  
tried to show him that his whole program was based  
upon a misconception of the facts. The President ex-  
pressed regrets that he could not persuade me to support  
his program, but expressly declared that he fully ap-  
preciated the depth and sincerity of my convictions and,  
under the circumstances, could not insist upon my sup-  
port of his program. I told him that I felt it my duty,  
knowing the facts as I do, to fight it. He assured me  
that in spite of my opposition to his program, it would  
not interrupt our cordial relations." To another friend  
Kitchin added with reference to the President: "He  
has got his under jaw set." <sup>43</sup>

If Wilson had it in mind at this time to win the war  
for the Allies by sending American forces to Europe,  
it is obvious that Kitchin did not suspect it.<sup>44</sup> He kept  
talking in terms of defense. Even if the submarine  
controversy, then quiescent, should finally lead to a

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breach, he did not consider, and did not think that Wilson would consider, offensive war. Apparently the Reidsville, North Carolina, *Review* was not so sure about the President. If Wilson should convince Kitchin in the matter, it said, "it will begin to look to a man up a tree as if the President has some sure enough 'raw head and bloody bones' up his sleeve which the general public is not permitted to see." <sup>45</sup>

As to Kitchin's alleged hostility to Daniels the correspondence between the two offers not the least trace of it. On the contrary, it indicates that they were quite cordial. And Mr. Daniels declares that they were. A mutual friend wrote Kitchin, "I hear that it is hostility to Josephus that is influencing you. . . . It is so strange to me that no one is ever supposed to have an honest opinion." <sup>46</sup>

Some of Kitchin's correspondents who appreciated his position, and were more or less sympathetic with it, urged him to fall in line with the President, or at least to show a generous spirit of compromise, to save the party from internal strife and possibly from defeat. The sentiment for "preparedness" was sweeping the country and would be irresistible; it had the backing of "every important newspaper in the East except the New York *Evening Post*, which has only twenty-eight thousand circulation." <sup>47</sup> Resistance would be futile, so he should bow to the inevitable and preserve party harmony. His refusal to do this was widely attributed



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to his alleged obstinacy and love of publicity. According to those who knew him best, he hated publicity.<sup>48</sup> Whether he was "cussedly" obstinate or laudably steadfast resolved itself into a question of whether one liked his point of view. It should not be forgotten, however, that he was profoundly aware of his responsibility and fully convinced of the rightness of his course.

As time for the opening of Congress approached, the press campaign against Kitchin was intensified. "KITCHIN NOW RIFT IN LUTE OF DEMOCRATIC HARMONY," shouted a headline in the New York *Evening Sun*. "The Democrats' stormy petrel is not so much William J. Bryan as Claude Kitchin," said the *Sun*. "Just as they are about to start the Congressional mill for another session, in which a high degree of harmony is necessary, their designated House floor leader is found kicking at the traces."<sup>49</sup> The same paper a few days later animadverted editorially:<sup>50</sup>

"The pacifist element in the House of Representatives, headed by Mr. Claude Kitchin of North Carolina, the nominal Democratic floor leader, will fight apparently all schemes of military and naval evolution [*sic*] on the theory that there is no earthly danger of the country becoming involved in the war and that, if it were, differing from all European countries, it could improvise a defense speedily enough to prevent such disaster as overtook France and Russia in the

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early stages of the present war [ignoring the difference between contiguous territory and an ocean barrier with coast defense]. It is said that about fifteen Democratic members coincide in views with Mr. Kitchin."

"About fifteen Democratic members!" Kitchin said from four-fifths to five-sixths of them, and the estimates of other leaders were essentially in accord with his.<sup>51</sup> The militant press of both parties based its argument against him upon the obviously false assumption that on the paramount issue of the time he was out of accord with his party (Wilson agreed that it was not a party question) and in particular with those whom he was supposed to lead (the majority of whom followed him as far as they dared). The *New York Times* was much exercised editorially over "A Democratic Peril." It identified the party with the President and said that Kitchin would not be leading his party but opposing it. Erroneously assuming that most of the Democrats in Congress would readily follow the Administration in the matter, it represented Kitchin as only the nominal leader of his party in the House and actually the head of an obstructionist minority.<sup>52</sup> Many other papers adopted this interpretation. The *New York Tribune* delivered one or two volleys and thereafter ignored Kitchin. The *World* "wrote him down" in its news columns but gave him little attention editorially. The Hearst papers, being anti-British, were more friendly toward him. Some papers in Kitchin's own state, in-

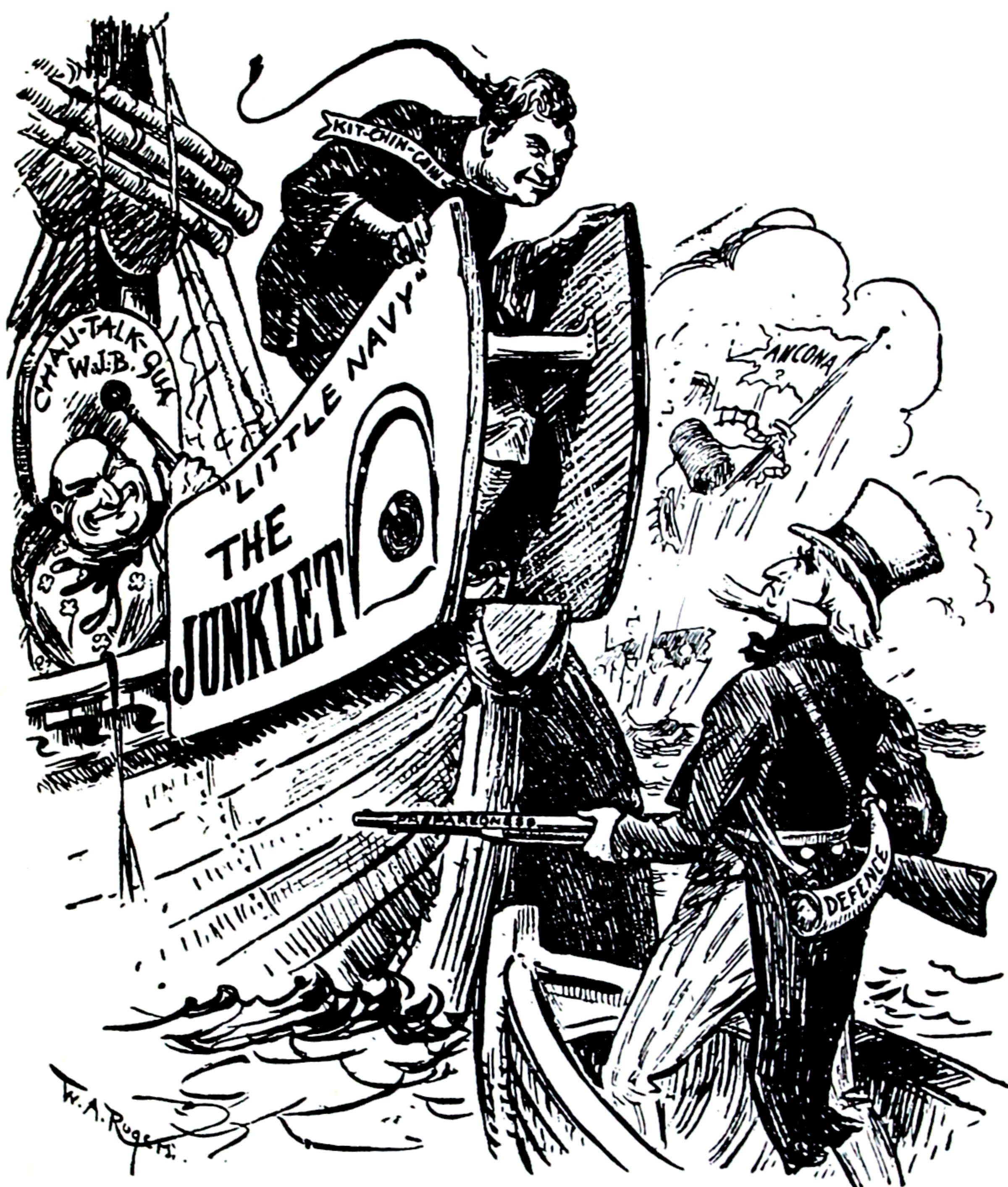
FIGHTING "JINGOES AND WAR TRAFFICKERS" including the *Charlotte Observer* and the *Fayetteville Observer*, held that if he could not support the President he should resign the leadership.<sup>53</sup> Other papers went so far as to say that he should resign his seat and not offer for reëlection.<sup>54</sup> The *Seven Seas* generously conceded him the right to *vote* against preparedness, but said he should not "be allowed to discuss it in the House."<sup>55</sup>

But the paper that conducted the most vigorous and unscrupulous campaign against Kitchen was James Gordon Bennett's pro-French New York *Herald*. Beginning on November 10 and continuing until Congress assembled it screamed forth daily in feature articles with double- to quintuple-column headlines, in editorials and cartoons, against Kitchen's "Chinese" policy of supine unpreparedness. Mostly by implication and innuendo, it lamented his obstinate stupidity. He was cartooned as a silly little boy offering a toy tin cannon to Wilson (in heroic stature) and as being caught up in a cyclone of protest from his constituency. Absurdly mistaking its man, the *Herald* sought to frighten him from his position with manufactured reports of an ominous opposition to him in his district. "CONSTITUENTS OF MR. KITCHEN BACK PRESIDENT ON DEFENSE, INQUIRY BY HERALD SHOWS. . . . *Telegrams of Citizens Reveal 20 out of 24 Refute. . . . Random Inquiries among Representative Citizens in Eight Counties Bring Repudiations.*"<sup>56</sup> The same day

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editorially: "REPRESENTATIVE KITCHIN'S CHINESE POLICY REPUDIATED BY HIS NEIGHBORS." Next day: "MR. KITCHIN HASTENS HOME TO 'CHANGE MINDS' OF 'FOLK' WHO DECLARED FOR DEFENSE — *Kitchin admits Opposition But Says It Is Based on Misinformation. He's Going to Tell Them the 'True Facts.'*" Next day: "MR. KITCHIN'S 'BACK HOME' FOLK OVERWHELMINGLY FOR PRESIDENT ON NATIONAL DEFENSE ISSUE — *Sentiment in Wilson, Metropolis of the Second North Carolina District, Shows Ninety Per Cent of Representative's Constituents Are Opposed to His Views. . . . Stirs Up Veritable Bumble Bees' Nest — Old Friends and Supporters Express Surprise That He Should Ignore Wishes of His Own People.*"<sup>57</sup> The *Herald* reporter claimed that he could find only one man in the district who stood by Kitchin in the matter. The next day the headlines stretched across five columns: "MR. KITCHIN AROUSES STORM OF DISSENT 'BACK HOME' IN HIS FIGHT AGAINST AN ADEQUATE ARMY AND NAVY."<sup>58</sup> . . . WILL HAVE TO RECKON WITH CONSTITUENTS. . . . They don't . . . attempt to explain why he stands out as one of a handful of men who are against the Administration in its effort to place the American nation on a footing to defend itself. . . ." <sup>59</sup> If he *won't* go with his own party why *doesn't* he get out? Then more pointedly: "MR. KITCHIN'S CONGRESSIONAL SEAT THREATENED UNLESS HE BOWS TO PRESIDENT ON DEFENSE — *Talk of Rival for Nomination* . . ." <sup>60</sup> A to-





"HAVE YOU GONE MAD, UNCLE SAM?"  
"YES—AND I'M GITTIN' MADDER BY THE MINUTE"

CARTOON BY W. A. ROGERS IN *New York Herald*.



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bacco-warehouse man at Wilson "would give a thousand dollars tomorrow to start a campaign to nominate someone else." "A stern rebuke awaits him if he persists in his present attitude," but he will be "forgiven" if he yields. And similar stuff every day. "*Constituents Disgusted with Kitchin*," "*Career Is At Stake*," "*Impending Break-up of Democratic Party*." <sup>61</sup> "The Administration must apply the weight of full party authority to the recalcitrants or depend upon the votes of Republicans and Progressives." <sup>62</sup>

How much truth was behind all this? A purported interview with Kitchin which formed the basis of the attack upon him was faked in the editorial rooms of the *Herald*, and its alleged author knew nothing of it until he saw it in print. <sup>63</sup> Groups of Kitchin's constituents were asked what they thought of Wilson, with no reference to the particular issue or to their Representative, and as they were Democrats they were all for the President. Men who were known to favor "preparedness" were "questionnaired." Professor Charles L. Coon wrote that he gave the *Herald* reporter the names of numbers of local men who agreed with Kitchin, but they were not interviewed. <sup>64</sup> The actual extent of the opposition to Kitchin was indicated the following spring when an Administration candidate was brought forth in the Democratic primary, partly through activities of the *Herald*, and was defeated nearly five to one. <sup>65</sup>

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Of the *Herald* propaganda Kitchin wrote: "This paper (whose owner, years ago, disdaining the fellowship of Americans, abandoned his native country to live amid the high life of Paris, and who by cable from Paris dictates its policy) has been fighting the Democratic party for nearly twenty years. This is the same paper which only a few months ago, to show its disgust and contempt for President Wilson, . . . loudly exclaimed, 'Oh, for a Roosevelt in the White House!'

"The purported interview by its Washington correspondent with me, published in its issue of November 10th,\* parts of which have been published in every issue since, is a pure *fabrication, a deliberate falsehood, manufactured in the Herald's office in New York for the purpose of forming a basis for its succeeding attacks and sensational stories*. No such interview ever occurred. I never saw or spoke to its correspondent before its publication. After reading it in the *Herald*, I saw and asked its Washington correspondent if he sent such an interview to the *Herald*. He said he had not and knew nothing about it until he saw it published in the *Herald*. I never made a reference in the remotest way to any one in Washington or elsewhere as to the 'sentiment in my district' or as to 'the folks back home'! It knew, too, or could have known, as its Washington correspondent knew, that I did not 'return to my dis-

\* Properly the 11th.

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strict because of its exposures of the sentiment in my district.' I returned the day I intended to return when, three days before, I went to Washington." <sup>68</sup>

Among the most presumptuous attacks upon Kitchin, featured in the militant press, was one which came from Henry Woodhouse, governor of the Aero Club of America and member of the Conference Committee on National Preparedness, representing nine militant organizations. <sup>67</sup> "I note by a floating newspaper story," wrote H. L. Mencken, "that you have had a disagreeable exchange with one 'Henry Woodhouse,' a professional patriot. This 'Woodhouse,' I take it, is the same one who edits a weekly dealing with aeronautics, and is constantly bursting into the newspapers in eloquent defense of the anti-German foreign policy of Mr. Lansing. If so, he is a sweet and hollow sham. His right name is Enrico Casalegno (Italian for Woodhouse), and he is a cook by profession. In 1906 he was second cook at the Maryland Club, here in Baltimore, and used his right name. He is an Italian, and this fact explains his patriotic eagerness to stir up Germanophobia." <sup>68</sup>

About the same time the commander of an aviation corps wrote confidentially that Woodhouse was backed by the Curtis Aero Co.; that he and Henry A. Wise Wood (chairman of the Conference Committee on National Preparedness), whom Woodhouse was so exercised to defend against charges of patrioteering,



FIGHTING "JINGOES AND WAR TRAFFICKERS" were obtaining government orders for Curtis planes, with no competition and no bids, and were sending students to the Curtis company at rates higher than were being charged by other companies.<sup>69</sup> But, according to Woodhouse, they were not profiting in any way by their patriotic activities. Wood was delivering about ten lectures a week and was even paying his own traveling expenses. Kitchin was admonished for his inability or unwillingness to recognize the country's plight and for his obstruction of the movement to save it from disaster. He replied that Woodhouse's letter was just "another evidence of the arrogance, assumption, and ignorance of the ordinary civilian militarist."<sup>70</sup>

The militant press continued its efforts to prevent Kitchin's election to the leadership. Again it was reported that the administration would use its influence to accomplish his defeat — although this was as promptly denied from the White House.<sup>71</sup> His colleagues were said to be plotting his overthrow, but this too proved false, and there was no opposition when time came to confirm his position.

If he could not be dislodged he must be discredited by "writing him down." Typical of the latter tactics was the following from the New York *Evening Sun*:<sup>72</sup>

"In the first place, it is admitted on all sides that Kitchin is not a broad gauged statesman, but a man with as local a point of view as can be found anywhere. With him it is always, What does my district desire? . . .

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He is moreover a Wall Street baiter, thinking a great deal like Bryan. . . .” He had been wished upon the House by the seniority rule and not by merit or the free choice of his colleagues.

Such characterizations, widely reiterated, had a cumulative effect upon the public estimate of the majority leader. Many liberals, in no wise sympathetic with the viewpoint of these papers, were doubtless influenced in time to think of him as more or less shallow and provincial. “Claude Kitchin was a most misunderstood man and a much underrated man,” said Representative Green (Republican from Iowa). “. . . He incurred the enmity of the press in certain parts of the country and was often misrepresented and sometimes even belittled in the newspapers. . . . Some newspapers never lost an opportunity to disparage his ability and depreciate his service.”<sup>73</sup>

Apparently the press was widely successful in spreading the belief that he was chosen for the leadership solely because of the seniority rule. Yet the testimony from his colleagues and others is strongly to the contrary. According to Thomas L. Reilly (Democratic Representative from Connecticut), “Mr. Kitchin was the overwhelming choice of the Democratic members of the House.”<sup>74</sup> John Temple Graves declared: “He would have beaten any New England candidate three to one. He would have doubled the vote of any candidate from Pennsylvania or New York, and swept any

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Southern or Western entry off his feet." <sup>75</sup> "If fellow-ship, industry, resourcefulness and eloquence are indications of leadership," said the *Christian Science Monitor*, "Mr. Kitchin will make a first class House leader." <sup>76</sup> "He was the most popular and best liked floor leader that Congress ever had on either side during my seventeen years' service in the House," writes Judge E. Yates Webb. "I have seen him walk in on the floor of the House, and both Republican and Democratic sides would rise en masse and applaud him." <sup>77</sup> He was "a dominant figure in the House from the beginning of his Congressional career," said Republican Representative Clarence Cannon. "The majority leadership . . . under his genius became in power and influence second only to the Presidency itself." <sup>78</sup>

At the end of his first session as majority leader, Kitchin received the following commendation from the militant Republican leader, A. P. Gardner: <sup>79</sup>

"I take this occasion to say to you what I have frequently said *about* you: — When it first became obvious that you would be the Democratic leader in the present House, many of the members on the Republican side doubted your ability to fulfill the needs of the position on account of the circumstance that they regarded you more as a wit than a student. That feeling has entirely passed away and in its place has grown up an appreciation of the fact that during this past session you have fully equaled the standard of leadership set

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by your predecessors on either side of the House. In the matter of tolerance and patience, you have set a higher standard than I have observed during the fourteen years of my service in Congress."

As was expected, the President's message to Congress in December, 1915, placed chief emphasis upon preparedness, but it notably lacked the convincing force that usually characterized his public addresses. Kitchin wrote to Bryan: "I do not think the President's message on preparedness made a very serious impression on the joint session of the two bodies. Perhaps you have already seen in the newspapers that there was not a ripple of applause relative to any portion of his remarks on preparedness; I heard many members, who will vote with the President, express surprise and regret that he did not show any reason for his change of attitude since the last Congress, nor any necessity for the Program."<sup>80</sup>

When Wilson went out in January to convert the Middle West — anti-war and lukewarm to his new departure — Kitchin perceived the inconsistencies of his pronouncements, and was greatly perturbed at the bellicose tones at times apparent. He recalled the assurance in New York in November that "We have in mind to be prepared, not for war, but only for defense." "Now it seems," wrote Kitchin to Bryan, "that preparedness is for war."<sup>81</sup> Wilson had earlier said, "No thoughtful



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man feels any panic or haste in this matter. The country is not threatened from any quarter." But at St. Louis he said, "Speaking in all solemnity I assure you there is not a day to be lost." The country is threatened! "From what quarter?" asked Bryan. There was no answer. It might prove impossible, said Wilson, to remain neutral and still preserve our "national honor" (whatever that meant). We must be prepared to cope with any conceivable foe; we must have "incomparably the greatest navy in the world." (Not even the Navy League had dared expect so much.) Was Wilson merely taking the wind out of Roosevelt's sails, or did he have "some sure enough raw head and bloody bones up his sleeve"? Perhaps he had got the jitters from such propaganda as the motion picture, "Battle Cry of Peace," which Kitchin thought he must surely have seen before his Western tour.<sup>82</sup> At any rate, "the President's war-alarming, Rooseveltian speeches in the West," wrote Kitchin, "seem to have overawed some of the press and the people who had been making a fight against his program. However, . . . I am still hoping that we can greatly modify if not defeat it."<sup>83</sup>

One phase of the preparedness program was defeated early in the session — that of Garrison's Continental ("citizen") Army.<sup>84</sup> Most militant of all members of the cabinet, Secretary Garrison had proposed a plan, which Wilson had approved, based upon compul-

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sory military service to build up a huge standing army on the European principle. But Kitchin and his group were unalterably opposed to this principle. Opposition to Garrison's plan came not only from the anti-militarists, but also from Republicans who felt that it did not go far enough toward militarization and from the vested interests of the state militia. The overwhelming opposition in the House forced the President to sacrifice Garrison, who resigned on February 10, 1916. "The President realized," said Kitchin, "that Congress would not agree to the Continental Army plan and that it would be futile to fight for it. Secretary Garrison wanted to keep on fighting." So Wilson let him go.<sup>85</sup>

This was erroneously interpreted by the press as a compromise whereby the House would yield to the rest of the Administration program and would force Kitchin to fall in line or step aside. "HOUSE DEMOCRATS CALL UPON KITCHIN TO LEAD FIGHT FOR PREPAREDNESS OR MAKE WAY FOR SPEAKER CLARK," shouted the *Times*.<sup>86</sup> It erroneously assumed that Clark and the Majority of the Democratic members would now yield completely to the President, and would depose Kitchin if he refused to give in. Said Speaker Clark, "Talk of such actions is arrant nonsense and tomfoolery."<sup>87</sup> Parker Anderson reported in the Greensboro *Daily News* that there was absolutely no truth in the rumors of a move in the House to depose Kitchin: "Claude Kitchin is popu-

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lar, and his personal following far exceeds that of any other man who has occupied the position of majority leader."<sup>88</sup>

Still the New York *World* editorially interpreted the situation: "It is within the power of the Congressional majority to end this imposition peremptorily. It is within the power of Mr. Kitchin to end it honorably and agreeably by surrendering his claims to the leadership. Which shall it be?"<sup>89</sup> It turned out to be neither.

It was early apparent that a majority in the House, including most of the Democrats, would obstinately oppose the Administration program; while a majority in the Senate, despite the opposition of some outstanding leaders, would press for large increases in both army and navy. The Hay bill, passed in the House on March 23, 1916, provided for an army of one hundred and forty thousand. An amendment offered by Representative Kahn (Republican) to raise this number to two hundred and twenty thousand was defeated, 213 to 191. A move by A. P. Gardner to provide for a Continental army of the Garrison type without the compulsory feature was defeated 203 to 190. However, to provide for a larger number of reserves, another amendment of Gardner's, reducing the length of enlistment from three years to one year and extending the period in which men were subject to call from four years to six, was passed, 204 to 198.<sup>90</sup>

Kitchin considered this a conservative bill, "not par-

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ticularly objectionable"; but he feared what the Senate would do to it. He feared, further, what the pressure of militant groups and of the Administration might accomplish in the end. "Many of us, however, will continue the fight," he wrote to the president of the Farmers' Union of North Carolina.<sup>91</sup>

On April 6 the Senate voted, 34 to 36, for a Continental army to be raised on a volunteer basis.<sup>92</sup> Those who favored this plan, as against that of an enlarged state militia, or National Guard, urged that the militia lacked efficiency, coördination, and centralized control. Those who opposed it saw in the proposed Continental army a long step toward the Prussianization of America. They believed that, of all military branches, the militia was the least conducive to the form and spirit of militarism. They proposed to remedy its defects by "federalizing" it and centering its ultimate control in Washington.

The Senate bill, passed on April 18, provided for two hundred and fifty thousand officers and men in the regular peace-time force; a Continental army of two hundred and sixty-one thousand; a national guard to be increased to two hundred and eighty thousand; and youth service corps in schools and colleges, expected to yield over two hundred thousand — an aggregate of about a million. The conference committee of the two Houses spent many stormy sessions in the next few weeks seeking an agreement on these widely dis-





CARTOON BY BERRYMAN IN *Washington Star*.



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parate bills. The House group, especially insistent upon defeating the Continental army plan, yielded much to gain this point.<sup>93</sup>

As finally passed, and signed by the president on June 3, the National Defense Act authorized the increase of the regular army to one hundred and eighty-six thousand, eventually (and immediately if war impended), to be raised to two hundred and twenty-three thousand; a "federalized" national guard to be increased by successive increments to four hundred and twenty-five thousand; civilian training camps; and reserve officers' training corps in schools and colleges — but no Continental army. With the backing of the Kitchen forces, provision was made for a government-owned plant to produce nitrates for munitions.<sup>94</sup>

More prominent in the public mind — or at least more publicized — from the beginning of the agitation was the matter of the navy. It was mainly a question of large outlays for capital ships — dreadnaughts and battle cruisers, — advocated by the Admiralty, the steel interests, and civilian navalists, as against concentrating mostly upon smaller craft with coast defenses, favored by Kitchen and his group. The Administration program, contrary to all precedent, covered a period of five years. Omitting auxiliary vessels, such as hospital ships, supply ships, and transports, the program was as follows:<sup>95</sup>

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*Fiscal year*

<i>ending in</i>	<i>1917</i>	<i>1918</i>	<i>1919</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>1921</i>	<i>Total</i>
Battleships	2	2	2	2	2	10
Battle cruisers	2	0	1	2	1	6
Scout cruisers	3	1	2	2	2	10
Destroyers	15	10	5	10	10	50
Fleet submarines	5	4	2	2	2	15
Coast submarines	25	15	15	15	16	85

The estimated cost of this program (including equipment and personnel) was \$248,000,000 for the first year and \$1,017,000,000 for the five years. The cost of construction alone was placed at \$502,482,214.

"With the prize of \$502,000,000 glittering before them," said the Greensboro *Daily News* editorially, "it is no wonder that the Lords of Steel are hot for preparedness. It is no wonder that they are liberally financing every agency of publicity, from newspapers to moving picture-shows, in order to convince the people that for their own protection they ought to donate half a billion to steel."<sup>96</sup>

On this point Kitchin called attention to an article on "The Economy of War" by F. W. Hirst in the London *Economist*, which he summarized as follows:<sup>97</sup>

"He shows from court records and Parliamentary investigations the tremendous influence of the munition plants in shaping the big armament policies of the nations and the insidious way in which they capture

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public sentiment and alarm one nation into making preparations against another, how they control the press, etc. Hirst predicted in a speech before the Glasgow Philosophical Society in 1910 that the rivalry in dreadnaughts among the nations of Europe caused by munition manufacturers would end in either bankruptcy of the nations or drenching Europe in blood. His prediction has come true."

The Democrats of the House Committee on Naval Affairs were in a dilemma. Most of them were inwardly, if not outwardly, opposed to the Administration program, but some were restrained by Administration influence. Months of hearings, discussions, and political cross-wormings left them still sorely divided. The weight of expert testimony indicated that the navy was more in need of cruisers than of battleships, and that in the capital-ship class it was wiser to concentrate upon cruisers. But the Advisory Board, representing vested interests, urged the more costly and vainglorious battleships; and the Administration was similarly inclined. "A very considerable number of naval officers who testified before the committee," said Daniels, "showed that they favored battle cruisers instead of battleships for a time, owing to the pressing need of this type of ship. . . . The opinion of the general board, however, in which I concur, was that it was probably wiser to divide our new construction of capital-ships this year between dreadnaughts and battle cruisers." 88



## FIGHTING "JINGOES AND WAR TRAFFICKERS"

What to do? A majority report must be made, and political expediency demanded that it be unanimous. By the middle of May a compromise seemed in sight. The "little navy" men would agree to provide for four (later five) battle cruisers — a much more generous provision for capital ships than they had formerly been willing to grant, — ten destroyers, twenty submarines, auxiliary ships, and the strengthening of coast defenses. Administration forces, in turn, were to abandon the five-year program, provide only for one year, include no dreadnaughts, and pledge an appropriation for a conference of the Powers, to be called by the President at the end of the war, with a view to drastic limitation of armaments. This last was a pet project of Committeeman Hensley and was regarded by the "little navy" group as a major concession, along with the elimination of dreadnaughts. Before the report of the committee was submitted, Representatives Page and Hensley had a conference with Secretary Daniels, at which they were assured, they said, that the Administration would accept the compromise program. Afterward, however, it threw its force behind the Senate bill, which was even more objectionable to the Kitchin group than the original Administration program. Hensley, R. N. Page, Kitchin and others came to feel that Daniels and the Administration had double-crossed them. But evidently Daniels, and probably Wilson, felt that approval of this compromise among the House Democrats

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was a matter of political tactics which did not necessarily commit the Administration to the support of the House bill against the more acceptable one later furthered by the Senate.<sup>99</sup>

Recently interrogated on this point, Mr. Daniels explained that, since he "believed strongly in the construction of battle cruisers" and was anxious that the majority report of the House committee be unanimous, he agreed at the time to the compromise "in order to get our program through the committee." The Republicans, expecting a "little navy" report, were ready to spring a program not greatly different from the Democratic compromise.

"I never saw more consternation," writes Daniels, "than was shown on the faces of the Republicans who thought they were going to put the Democrats in a hole. When the vote [of the committee] was announced Kelly of Michigan, who was a fine type of American citizen, broke out in a horselaugh and told the whole story about how he and other Republicans thought they had outwitted the Democrats, but confessed that they had themselves lost out . . ."<sup>100</sup>

Although the compromise report of the House committee, and subsequently the House bill, provided for far the largest increase ever made in our navy, involving appropriations over sixty per cent above the highest ever previously made; it was quite unsatisfactory to the preparedness forces. The "little navy" men

FIGHTING "JINGOES AND WAR TRAFFICKERS" were pilloried in the militant press. "No further proof is needed," said the *New York Times* editorially, "that their work has not been undertaken in the right spirit."<sup>101</sup> The Republicans on the committee brought in a minority report providing for two dreadnaughts, six battle cruisers, six scout cruisers, twenty-eight destroyers, and fifty submarines. They favored a three-year program similar to the one later incorporated in the Senate bill but did not put this in their report.<sup>102</sup>

In the course of the debate that followed Kitchen was insistent that the Democrats solidly support the compromise measure. He was aware that many of them were inclined to yield to Administration influences and to the onslaughts of preparedness forces, being capitalized by the Republicans. He said that one of the highest officers in the Navy Department had testified before the committee "that the program which they of the Navy Department submitted for this Congress to approve by enactment was prepared largely on account of the 'preparedness' sentiment that had grown up in the country, and not so much in view of the real needs of this Government or the country. I have had Democrats to whisper to me, 'It's good politics for our party to advocate this preparedness . . . .' I have said to them, 'Gentlemen, all of us, from the President down, believe that this is a non-partisan question. . . . If we try to make politics out of it to catch these war traffickers, jingoes, munition plants, and their "patriotic

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societies," the Republicans are just smart enough to outbid us every time.' " 103

The Administration seems to have been quiescent about the passage of the House bill at this time. It was aware that the Senate was much more favorable to its program and that the time to use pressure in the House would come when the final act was impending.

"My fear is," wrote Kitchin, "that the Senate will add many millions to the Naval bill passed by the House . . ." 104 And his fear was justified. In fact the Senate conceded even more than the Administration to the "jingoism and war traffickers." As a further concession, it telescoped the President's five-year program into three years, with his approval. The Administration then applied the full measure of its influence to get the House to accept the Senate bill.\*

\* NAVAL PROGRAMS OF 1916 (EXCLUSIVE OF  
AUXILIARY AND MINOR CRAFT)

	<i>Admin. program</i>		<i>House bill</i>	<i>House Repub. plan</i>	<i>Senate bill</i>	
	<i>1st yr.</i>	<i>Total 5 yrs.</i>			<i>1st yr.</i>	<i>Total 3 yrs.</i>
<i>Type vessels</i>						
Battleships	22	10	0	2	4	10
Battle cruisers	2	6	5	6	4	6
Scout cruisers	3	10	0	6	4	10
Destroyers	15	50	10	28	20	50
Submarines	30	100	20	50	34	67
Est. cost in millions	248	1,017	241	272	316	1,000

The United States had at that time—built, building, and provided for:—17 first line battleships (dreadnaughts), 25 second line battleships, 10 armored cruisers, 5 first-class, 4 second-class, and 10 third-class cruisers, 9 monitors, 74 destroyers, 76 submarines, and various auxiliary craft. (*Congressional Record*, Vol. 53, p. 8918.)



## FIGHTING "JINGOES AND WAR TRAFFICKERS"

It was an election year — a Presidential election year. Hence it was "the time for all good men to come to the aid of their party." Would Kitchin's prediction come true — that many would "throw away their convictions and vote to please the President"?

No essential feature of the Senate bill was changed by the conference committee, for by that time some of the leading anti-militarist Democrats — including Padgett, the chairman of the House Committee on Military Affairs — had decided to go along with the President. Although it was evident when the bill came up for final action in the House that it would pass, it encountered a spirited opposition, led by Kitchin, Hensley, and Page. Charging the Administration with double-dealing, Page told of the conference which he and Hensley had had with Secretary Daniels before the Committee on Naval Affairs made its report. He produced a letter which he had written to Hensley the following day: <sup>105</sup>

"My dear Mr. Hensley: Following up our interview with the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Daniels, yesterday afternoon, at which time we both assured him that if the Department's naval program could be modified by the elimination of the five-year building program, the substitution of two battle cruisers for the two dreadnaughts proposed, making a total of capital ships four battle cruisers, and attaching to the naval appropriation bill your resolution providing an appropriation for authorizing the President to call a meeting of the repre-

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sentatives of all great Powers at the close of the present European War with a view to reaching an agreement as to future armament, Mr. Daniels communicated with me last night over the telephone and asked me to say to you as a member of the Naval Affairs Committee of the House that after consulting with the chairman of that committee he was ready to accept our proposition and hoped that you and myself would lend our best efforts to have a report on the naval bill signed by all the Democrats on the committee.

"As you know this carries me farther than I wanted to go, but I am agreeing to it. . . ."

Mr. Daniels explains the change in the attitude of the Administration as follows: "By that time the country, sensing that we might enter the war, 'was insistent upon ample preparedness . . . Page said to me that I had agreed to the compromise voted by the House Committee and that I ought to have insisted upon the Senate standing to the agreement. My recollection is that Hensley was not very much interested in Page's desire to have the House insist upon the original House Committee bill, seeing that the Senate had left in his resolution for an international conference to put an end to competitive Navy building. I explained to Mr. Page that he knew all the time my heart was set upon having the one hundred and fifty-seven ships built and that I was perfectly willing that cruisers should be substituted for some of the dreadnaughts, but that I

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had not undertaken to press my views upon the Senate  
and I could not recant my original recommendation  
to build one hundred and fifty-seven ships."<sup>106</sup>

It was left to Kitchin to close the debate for the anti-militarist forces. With all the dignity which his towering figure commanded and all the good humor for which he was loved, he spoke as follows:<sup>107</sup>

". . . I remember, two months ago, the chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs, the Democratic membership of that committee, the Democratic membership of the House, and as I understood it, the Secretary of the Navy, in behalf of his department and the Administration persuaded . . . the Democrats in the House to vigorously oppose and vote against what was then considered an extravagant, wild, and reckless program presented by the Republicans. Under such persuasion and insistence I got up in this House amid the applause of my fellow Democrats, led by the chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs, and denounced the Republican program presented in the minority report as criminal extravagance and recklessness. . . .

"And yet in two short months the chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs, the Secretary of the Navy, and the President and most of my fellow Democrats want me to get up now on this floor and eat my words. . . . I wish here to corroborate what the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. Page] has said. Both before and after the interview with the Secretary of the Navy,

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to which he referred, I conferred with him and Mr. Hensley and also with the chairman, Mr. Padgett. I was given to understand — I was expressly told — that if we could get the Democratic members of the Naval Committee and the Democrats in the House together on a one-year two hundred and forty million dollar program the Secretary of the Navy and the Administration would get behind it and make it the Administration program. Though this was many millions larger than many of us favored, I went to work to get my colleagues together. . . . The chairman stated on the floor of the House that the Navy Department and the Secretary of the Navy approved it enthusiastically. But this program is gone, and here comes the Butler [Republican] program to take its place. The first year of the program is enough like the one-year program of the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. Butler] and his colleagues to be twins. The three-year program — and Mr. Butler and his colleagues demanded in the committee a three-year program — out-Republicans the Republican program by over seventy-five million dollars. I denounced with the approval of the Navy Department and Chairman Padgett and my colleagues, the program of the Republicans as criminal extravagance and waste, and now, gentlemen, upon my honor as a man and a Member of this House I cannot see more virtue in it because, forsooth, within two months from today it has Democratic sanction — from the President



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down. If such a program was wrong and extravagant then, it is wrong and extravagant now, and more so because since then the two great naval powers of Europe have lost one hundred thousand tonnage each of war ships, and today the navy of Germany and of all other nations except Great Britain is far below the strength of the United States Navy, considering ships built, building and authorized, and we stand today far in the front as the second naval Power of the world.

"That is the rank in which the chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs, which the Republicans in their report, which the Administration, and which the war traffickers through their 'patriotic' organization, the Navy League, asked us to put this nation in — the second rank. We are in second rank, and every man who has taken the time to investigate knows it. The evidence last session before the Naval Committee showed we were then in second rank. The Secretary of the Navy himself then declared solemnly that the navy of the United States was stronger and superior to any navy on earth except that of Great Britain. The naval officers who appeared before the committee testified to that, the minority leader agreed to that on the floor of the House. The chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs, the Democrats, the real intelligent Republicans, every one admitted on this floor we were then second. . . ."

From the records of the Navy Department he com-

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pared the vastness of the proposed increase in our navy with that of other countries in preceding years and then continued:

"In face of the fact that the President, both in his messages to Congress and in public addresses, has repeatedly declared, '*We are threatened from no quarter*'; in face of the fact that we are in less danger from a foreign foe than ever before, . . . this program which we are asked by the Administration and the chairman of the Naval Committee to vote — *at one bound — one year — increases our already immensely large naval appropriations twice as much as the total increase by Great Britain in the three years prior to the European War; more than two and a half times as much as the total increase by Germany in the ten years preceding the war. . . .*

*"The three-year provision of the program requires an increase of appropriations over seven times more than the total increase by Great Britain in the ten years prior to the European War, ten times more than the total increase by Germany or any other nation except Great Britain in the ten years preceding the war . . ."* \*

He not only opposed the bill itself but feared the precedent it would establish for vested interests. "When this measure becomes law, thereby putting the arms of the munitions-makers into the treasury to the elbows, with their heretofore undreamed-of profits at stake, we

\* Italics his.

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can hardly conceive of a power in the nation strong enough to extract them.\* I fear that the big interests behind this program, with their tremendous and irresistible influence and their infinite ingenuity will find or make a way to persuade or force the controlling factors of both parties to make perpetual the surrender to them of the Federal Treasury and to place permanently at their mercy the taxpayers of the country. The three-year provision in the program is nothing more nor less than an outrage upon the taxpayers — an outrage as pleasing and beneficial to big finance interested in munitions-making and shipbuilding as if they themselves had personally committed it. It guarantees them for three years the full benefit of the abnormally high prices of ships and munitions caused by the present war. That provision, in addition to the tremendous profits even at normal prices, is worth to them at least an extra hundred million dollars. Of course the program must be a three-year continuing one. And Congress votes it! And the Secretary of the Navy approves! And the President will sign! And then for the greatest orgy of graft and plunder and profits on the part of ingenious, despotic, coercive, organized avarice the world ever witnessed.

"With the three-year provision in, the big interests would only have to control either the Executive, the

\* How prophetic! Once the peace-time expenditures for armaments went up they stayed up. And neither party thereafter dared fight the vested interests to bring them down.

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Senate, or the House — either one could prevent its repeal or modification in a future Congress. . . . With the three-year provision out, and the naval program left to the wisdom and judgment of each Congress, as has been done since the beginning of the Government, the big interests would have to control all — the Executive, the Senate, and the House — to enforce their schemes. . . .

“The three-year program went in and will remain in. Every doubt, every possibility, has been resolved by this program in favor of the shipbuilders and munition makers — the Morgans, the Fricks, the Dodges, the Bacons, the Schwabs, the Perkinses, the Thompsons and so forth. The war-traffickers’ press already announces, with most flattering commendation, that the Secretary of the Navy will be ready, almost immediately after the bill becomes law, to ask for bids and award contracts to carry out the program, and so forth. They will have him to hurry, not that the country is in any danger of a foreign foe, but that the shipbuilders and munition-makers will be in danger of losing their high war prices if the secretary should delay until the end of the European War gets in sight. The people will find out sooner or later that it is profit to the contractors, not danger to the country, that has been one of the great incentives and inspirations to the speed and size of the program. . . .

“My time has expired. I regret that I have not the



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time to discuss *the big, overreaching objections to this program. I shall have to be content with saying that, in my judgment, when order is restored in Europe it will be a fresh menace to the peace and humanity of the world. It condemns our pretensions to international arbitration and a world peace as hypocrisy and mockery.*” \*

The bill, which provided appropriations for the army, the navy, coast defenses, and Government-owned nitrate and armor-plate plants amounting to \$661,418,000 † for the ensuing fiscal year, was passed by a vote of 283 to 51 (with 41 pairs).<sup>108</sup> Kitchen commented as follows:

“On Tuesday, in spite of the protest and fight of a few of us, the House passed the conference report, containing the outrageous Naval program. Even when order is restored in Europe, this step on the part of our

\* Italics mine.

† Before the end of the fiscal year the United States entered the World War, hence this appropriation had to be generously supplemented. In this connection the following table is illuminating. (The figures are from D. R. Dewey, *Financial History of the United States*, 495, 516.)

#### FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FOR WAR AND OTHER PURPOSES

(In Millions of Dollars)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Army</i>	<i>Navy</i>	<i>Pensions</i>	<i>All war purposes</i>	<i>All other purposes</i>
1913	160	133	175	468	215
1914	174	140	173	487	213
1915	173	142	164	479	252
1916	165	155	159	479	245
1917	440	2,257	160	2,857	1,109
1918	5,684	1,367	181	7,232	6,537
1919	9,253	2,099	222	11,574	7,366

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Government will be a fresh menace to the peace and humanity of the world. I am trusting that sanity will soon be restored to the people and to Congress, so that it will have the courage to repeal or greatly modify the Naval program. . . .”<sup>109</sup>

“Who’ll pay the bill,” said the little red hen.

“Not I,” said the pig.

“Not I,” said the goose.

“Not I,” said the goat.

And so said they all.

It is one of the most interesting points in all the Kitchin papers to note how widely the very men who had clamored most loudly for preparedness, and later for war, protested in like manner against every proposed tax that would take a nickle from their pockets. Kitchin noted that many of the same people who had upbraided him for opposing the Administration on preparedness had turned against it themselves when it sponsored taxes that touched their interests. Everybody had a scheme for taxing the other fellow, often in a way that would benefit his own business.<sup>110</sup> Even the Du Ponts — of all people! — so active in financing preparedness propaganda and so richly rewarded by the results, protested against the proposed tax on munitions.

“The Du Pont Powder Company of course protested against our levying in the Revenue bill a tax on mu-

FIGHTING "JINGOES AND WAR TRAFFICKERS" munitions, and especially on their product — powder," wrote Kitchin. "The Du Ponts have had a monopoly on the sale of powder to this government for over fifty years. During the European War its stock has gone up from eight hundred to one thousand per cent. [He was writing in August, 1916.] They have made, we understand, over one hundred per cent profit on their products sold to the Allies, and this applies to almost all munitions makers. You will see, therefore, that the Du Pont Powder Company is able to pay the munitions tax. . . . No class of people was one-half as instrumental in arousing public sentiment — or rather in alarming and frightening public sentiment — in behalf of 'preparedness' and increased appropriations. . . . They will get the benefit of these appropriations" and should pay a large part of the tax.<sup>111</sup>

It was Kitchin's plan to finance such measures of preparedness as might be enacted by increases in the income tax — without lowering the exemptions — by levies on large incomes and inheritances and on munitions, without any sort of sales tax. He always favored progressive as against regressive taxes. He rejected the Administration's plan for taxes on gasoline, bank checks, etc. and for lowering the income tax exemptions.<sup>112</sup> In the main his program was adopted.\*

\* Kitchin's financial problems and policies are elaborated in Chapter V, below.



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From the time the question of financing preparedness arose and Kitchin's views became known, the conservative press was increasingly hostile and unfair toward him. The New York *Times* hatched up a prize story which had more potent political consequences than it could have realized at the time or than historians have yet recognized. From this story it was made to appear that Kitchin was a narrow-minded, vindictive Southerner, using his high office to fleece the North for the benefit of the South, and to "punish patriotism" by deliberately putting the burden of taxation upon Northern business and especially upon the regions and groups which had patriotically championed the cause of national defense.

It all began with an article in the *Times* on January 27, 1917. He was reported as having said to "the group of insurgent Southern Democrats" the night before: "You can tell your people that practically all of this tax will go north of the Mason and Dixon Line. The preparedness agitation had its hotbed in such cities as New York. This bill places a tax on those who have been clamoring for preparedness. . . ."

"*I did not say that or anything of the kind,*" said Kitchin when the article was read in the House, and his colleagues later bore him out. "I never mentioned the Mason and Dixon Line, nor did I mention New York City; but I will say *now* that this tax will go to pay *appropriations* practically all, or most all, of which will



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go north of the Mason and Dixon Line. The appropriations for preparedness will go for the most part to shipyards, munitions-makers and so forth. These *happen* to be north of the Mason and Dixon Line." He later added on this point, "I make and have made no complaint about that." \*

"Where does the gentleman think the tax will fall — south of the Mason and Dixon Line?" inquired Mr. Norton.

Kitchin had to acknowledge that the greater part of it would be paid in the North; but to "get rid of the location argument," he invited all those who objected to paying it there to move down to his town of Scotland Neck and pay it in the South.<sup>118</sup>

Despite his categorical denial, the *Times* declared next day: "The majority leader substantially confirmed his statement as it appeared in THE TIMES and elaborated upon it, although he asserted he did not recall having used the expression, 'north of the Mason and Dixon Line.'" This was followed by misquotations of his remarks on the floor — as appears by comparing the *Times* article with the *Congressional Record*.

The following Monday Mr. Moore (Republican from Pennsylvania) read to the House the same story, as reprinted in a Washington paper. When his attention was called to the fact that the matter had been discussed

\* Italics mine.

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on Saturday, he replied, "It is so good that I thought we had better have it twice."

"There is not a word of truth in it," said Kitchin. "Never in my life have I intimated in a caucus or elsewhere any such statement. . . . I have been in this House, gentlemen, for sixteen years. I have been more or less in public life . . . since 1892. And never in my life, in my district, or my state, or in caucus, or in the House, or elsewhere, have I uttered one word or one sentiment that would in any way arouse sectional feeling or prejudice . . . [Applause.] From the time when Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant shook hands at Appomattox as an earnest of perpetual peace between the North and the South, the result of the Civil War became in the hearts and minds of my people a fixed finality." He added that even *if he were* to make such a statement as was attributed to him by the press it would be *resented* by the people of his section.<sup>114</sup>

The story as it first appeared in the *Times* was repeated, with many embellishments, through the North and West and made the text of many an editorial diatribe. "The North must pay for national preparedness because the North believes in national defense, while the South is indifferent," said the *Boston Journal*. "The North is also buying some handsome marble post offices for Southern villages and is dredging some forgotten Southern creeks, but the South is exempt from paying taxes for anything. . . . The country is

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not united and never will be united while such sectionalists as Kitchin hold positions as superintendents and foremen of the national destiny."<sup>115</sup> In the same city the patriotic *Transcript* commented: "If Southern politicians are so mean-spirited that they want to be treated as paupers and have the North pay the cost of the government and of governmental protection, well and good, but we prefer to believe that they misrepresent their constituencies."<sup>116</sup> The Indianapolis *News*, referring to the revenue bill, said Kitchin "proudly avows that it is sectional."<sup>117</sup> The New York *Evening Sun* inquired: "Is the Honorable Claude Kitchin an American citizen or only a Representative in Congress from North Carolina?"<sup>118</sup> A cartoon in the New York *Herald* showed a pipe line running from "Northern Industries" across the Mason and Dixon line and pouring floods of money into the Southern "Pork Barrel," while Kitchin pointed to the process with a smirk.<sup>119</sup>

If conservative papers of both parties were employing such propaganda to discredit those who would place the burden upon the profiteers, hoping to have it shunted to the backs of the masses in the form of sales taxes and the like, Republican organs and politicians found in it a powerful political argument for use in the North and West.\* Having established in the public mind a per-

\* Employing the story in his campaign speeches, Senator Lodge swelled the total of expenditures in the South by including the cost of maintaining the United States Army on the Mexican border. (Clipping in Kitchin Collection from the ———, Maine *Herald*, Sept. 7, 1916.)



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verted concept of Kitchin as a narrow-minded, bigoted Southerner — later pictured as a tool of the Kaiser and a traitor to his country — they developed the convincing argument: Kitchin can not be defeated in his district, he can not be deposed from the majority leadership so long as the Democrats remain in power; hence the only way to get rid of "Kitchinism" is to send Republicans to Washington. The influence of this propaganda in 1916 and its cumulative force as a determining factor in the 1918 elections are yet to be appraised by historians.



“WE KEPT *HIM* OUT OF WAR”

VARIOUS motives were attributed to Kitchin for his opposition to the Wilson war policies. The charge that he was a pro-German may be dismissed as absurd. He was almost wholly of British stock, as were nearly all of his white constituents, and he obviously had no connection with any German or pro-German group at home or abroad. He condemned the frightfulness of Germany's submarine warfare as he did the ruthlessness of Britain's blockade. No doubt his resentment of the latter was accentuated by its adverse effects upon cotton and tobacco growers; there was much indignation in the South against Britain in this matter during the first two years of the war, for the section was more disastrously affected than any other. This attitude gave rise to the assumption in some quarters that the South was pro-German, which was not the case at all. Impassioned partisans could not, or would not, believe that a person might be resentful of the depredations of one side without being pro the other. Yet many who denounced Britain's arbitrary interference with neutral trade and her starvation of enemy populations were

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also indignant at Germany's frightfulness and did not desire a German victory. This was Kitchin's attitude.<sup>1</sup> Rumors that he was led to his position by alleged hostility to the Administration we have already shown to have been groundless. If his relations with the President became strained, it was a result rather than a cause of the controversy. Another rumor had it that he was dominated by Bryan. To those who really knew him this was ridiculous: Claude Kitchin could never have been dominated by anybody. He and Bryan were both products of the liberal agrarian movement, and they had much in common. They were devoted friends and fairly regular correspondents after Bryan left Washington in the summer of 1915. There was a mutual give and take of ideas in which Kitchin was doubtless the greater beneficiary, but he was rarely specifically advised and he always backed his own judgment. After he was raised to the leadership he usually announced his stand on important questions and was later commended by Bryan. He was not always in accord with the Great Commoner. He did not favor prohibition until it was virtually a *fait accompli*, and he never took any stock in the anti-evolution crusade. Even conservative papers acknowledged, before the campaign to discredit him got under way, that "Kitchin is not a man to take orders from the White House or from anywhere else. He is his own man."<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, be it said that there is no purpose



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here to make Wilson the villain of the piece. There is no desire to impugn his motives. If he was taken in by Allied propaganda from the early days of the war, if his policies were increasingly favorable to the side which he believed to be right, if he came to conceive of himself as the leader of a righteous crusade, there was no malevolence about it. To what extent he was influenced by personal ambition, by political expediency, by various economic interests, by militant propaganda, and by the advice of babes-in-the-wood, he himself was doubtless unable to weigh. Likewise the degree of responsibility for our entering the war assignable to Wilson's own purposes and to each of the other factors involved is too complex and imponderable to be estimated. If that step was a tragic blunder, as it appears to have been, neither Wilson nor Page nor House nor Morgan nor Roosevelt should be made a scapegoat. As Professor Beard has said, “the devil theory” of war responsibility is childish.<sup>8</sup>

But the fact remains that Wilson, with complete authority to direct our relations with the warring Powers, persisted in following a highly unneutral and war-threatening course which almost inevitably led us into the holocaust; and that Claude Kitchin, along with most other leaders of the President's own party in Congress, backed by large majorities in both Houses — at least until the potent resources of the Administration were employed in full force — fought for a more

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genuinely neutral and pacific course. That the President was beset by powerful economic and political forces and was ill advised by men of his own choice, whom he knew to be biased, helps greatly to explain his course but adds nothing to his wisdom as a statesman.

The main factors which were tending to draw us into the war may be outlined as follows:

(1) Wilson himself, his appointees in belligerent capitals, and the advisers upon whom he most relied were biased in favor of the Allies and against the Central Powers.

(2) A large majority of the American public was similarly biased and was easily victimized by propaganda.

(3) The Allies and their sympathizers were much more adroit, resourceful, and effective in the use of propaganda than their enemies.

(4) Our peace forces, ardent as they were and sincere at the core, were poorly integrated, weakly backed, and badly handicapped, on the one hand, by the too obvious acclaim of pro-Germans and, on the other, by the boring from within of militant pro-Allies who sought to exploit the movement for their own ends.

(5) We were lured by the growing volume of profitable trade occasioned by the war, which became the basis of a booming — though ephemeral — prosperity. To enjoy this trade we had to encounter the hazards of unlawful "blockades" on either side. As the Allies



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had more to offer us, as their huge naval superiority made their “blockade” more formidable, and as our sympathies were preponderantly on their side, we endured their arbitrary dicta and defied those of Germany.

(6) The time came when the Allies could no longer make their mounting purchases except on a credit basis. The Administration was besought to permit the granting of credits and later the floatation of loans to the Allies in this country. Reluctant at first, it yielded by degrees. And thus we developed a vested interest which ran into the billions in the ultimate triumph of the side upon which we had staked our “prosperity.”

(7) The Wilson Administration came to rationalize its one-sided policies on the faulty hypothesis that one side was fighting for the right and the other for the wrong, that one was even “fighting our battles” against the menace of the other. Wilson conceived of himself first as the great World Arbiter and finally as the Commander of Righteousness Triumphant.

Each of these factors calls for some elaboration.

Wilson, like most of our Presidents and their diplomatic agents, was little acquainted with the intricacies of Old-World diplomacy, and little interested in them. Though aware that the situation in Europe in the summer of 1914 was tense and threatening, he was bewildered by the rush of events and unprepared for the crash. According to Colonel House, his most intimate

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adviser, he was "singularly lacking in appreciation of the importance of this European crisis," being "more interested in domestic affairs." <sup>4</sup> At the moment of the onrush of arms Wilson was bereaved by the death of his first wife, Ellen Axson Wilson, who died on August 6, 1914. Turning his attention from this personal sorrow to a war-mad world, he enjoined his countrymen to be "impartial in thought as well as in action." <sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, he was not able to follow his own hard injunction. His ancestral and cultural background predisposed him toward Britain. Of British descent and schooled in British political thought, he had been since his college days a great admirer of the British people, of their institutions, and particularly of their form of government. In his doctoral thesis, *Congressional Government*, he had expounded the weakness of our system of divided authority and advocated greater concentration of power in the Administration. As President, he insisted upon directing legislative as well as executive policies, and, so long as his party was in full power, he succeeded in doing so as few Presidents have ever done. He could not brook interference. The dogmatic, domineering spirit of his patriarchal father, a Presbyterian divine, was passed on to him along with a Calvinist conscience. He was grounded in the eternal verities and confident of his power of righteous judgment. "We are custodians of the spirit of righteousness" was a typical expression. Scholarly but hardly profound, he was prone to gen-





*Photo by Brown Brothers*

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eralization and happy phrase-making. To paraphrase Hacker and Kendrick, he was more orator than thinker, more preacher than philosopher.<sup>6</sup> He loved humanity in the abstract but was aloof in personal relationships. Scarcely capable of sustained friendship, he threw over in time almost every friend of his political life, even Colonel House. He was strongly averse to war, except when convinced that it was for a righteous cause. But he was highly susceptible to a righteous cause, and that was where the Allied propaganda struck his most vulnerable point.

From his diplomatic service in belligerent capitals he received much heat but little light. How could it be otherwise? If in those chaotic days when European madness broke its leash the shrewdest diplomats were bewildered, what of our own ambassadors who notoriously were *not* shrewd diplomats? The United States is the one great Power that has consistently used its diplomatic service as a means of rewarding useful politicians, or eminent citizens, with little or no background or training in foreign diplomacy. Wilson had followed the usual custom. Thanks to our traditional policy — though it was not always religiously followed — of playing in our own back yard, this custom had not often been highly embarrassing; but in 1914 it was tragic.

Our ambassador to England, Walter Hines Page, was reproved by Wilson himself for his extreme pro-

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British conduct. Page had come from a newly prominent North Carolina family of English-French descent and had risen to eminence in the field of journalism. He had very creditably edited, in turn, the *Forum*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and the *World's Work*, the last of which he and Frank Doubleday had established in connection with their publishing house, Doubleday, Page and Company. He was an eminent citizen and a charming personality, but he was not prepared to cope with European diplomats. When he was appointed as ambassador to the Court of St. James by the incoming Wilson Administration a world war was little dreamed of by the President. When the war came, Page was quite unprepared for its implications. An ardent Anglophile to begin with, he was captivated by the English royalty and nobility, and was more than ready to accept the point of view of the British foreign office. Which he did with great zeal. So much so that he sometimes forgot that he represented a neutral country at a belligerent capital. "From the first," says Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, "he considered that the United States could be brought into the war on the side of the Allies if the issue were rightly presented to it and a great appeal made to the President." On one occasion, according to Grey, he brought in a note from our Government protesting against Britain's interference with our neutral trade; and having read it remarked: "I have now read the dispatch, but do not

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agree with it; let us consider how it should be answered”!<sup>8</sup>

Page was only Exhibit A of our diplomatic service. In none of the belligerent capitals did we have a representative prepared by training and experience to interpret the onset of catastrophe with even a semblance of wisdom. In Germany, Ambassador Gerard was somewhat more balanced than others, but he too accepted and defended the pro-Ally policies of the Administration.

Robert Lansing, our Secretary of State after Bryan resigned in June, 1915, was experienced in international affairs, having served as counsellor to several arbitration tribunals; but he was almost as biased as Page. During his first month in office, as recorded in his Memoirs, he drafted an “Outline of Policies,” which contained the following points: — “The settlement, for the time being at least, of the present submarine controversy because the American people are still much divided on the merits of war.” They were not yet ready to play a belligerent role, but he believed that in time they would be united against Germany. “A rigorous and continuing prosecution of all plots in this country and a vigilant watch on all Germans and their activities here.” (No watch on the Allies and their much wider activities, for they were evidently unsuspected.) Cultivation of friendly relations with Latin-American countries and investigation of German activities there. Purchase of the Danish West Indies to keep Germany from

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getting them. And finally, "The actual participation of this country in the war in case it becomes evident that Germany will be the victor. . . . We ought to look forward to this possibility and make ready to meet it." <sup>9</sup> This was written shortly before Wilson came out for "preparedness." To what extent Lansing influenced the President's policies is a controversial question.

Most potent of them all was the President's unofficial adviser and diplomat-at-large, Colonel House. A Texas politician who never sought office for himself but enjoyed the game of "king-maker" and "power-behind-the-throne," he had "made" and "advised" three governors of his state and had been very influential in the nomination and election of President Wilson. His title was indicative of his social standing as a Southern planter and not of military rank. Of impressive personality, he was suave but not obtrusive. Gifted with unusual political sagacity and liberal on politico-economic questions, he became the most intimate and trusted friend of Wilson's political life. When the war-clouds arose in the summer of 1914 he was in Europe as a confidential agent of the Administration bearing oil for the troubled waters — seeking especially to reconcile England and Germany; — and according to the Kaiser he "almost prevented the World War." <sup>10</sup> But he was a little too patently pro-British. Just one generation removed from England, he was almost as Anglophile as Page. In the crucial years of our "neu-



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trality” he repeatedly visited the capitals of Europe in quest of a “negotiated” peace, but he always had in mind a peace that would satisfy the Allies. He made his way among European potentates pleasantly but not always wisely. Unskilled in the wiles of diplomacy, he was sometimes tragically naïve — as will later appear.

If the Administration and its foreign agents were so unprepared for the conflict, what of the American public? It was in Stygian darkness, and hence was easily victimized by prejudice and propaganda. When the murder of the Archduke was announced, extremely few college graduates in this country could have had any notion of their own as to what lay behind the act or what repercussions it might bring. In the pre-war era, courses in history in our schools and colleges scarcely got beyond 1870. Historians of the old school held that recent history could not be treated objectively and hence should be avoided. As a result the American public was so ignorant of recent European history and contemporary politics, and so little interested in them, that even the largest of our dailies maintained practically no foreign service of their own. There was all but universal reliance upon British news-gathering agencies, which were naturally biased and which reflected their bias in our own press. There were exceptions. The Hearst papers were anti-British, largely because of personal and business conflicts in which Hearst had

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opposed British subjects. There were German-language papers with very limited circulations. Early in the war George Sylvester Viereck and his associates established a pro-German weekly, the *Fatherland*, printed in English. But all of these together represented a small clientele as compared with the vast pro-Ally press. And the bias of the latter found a response so ready and so natural that its propaganda went unsuspected.

For although our prejudices were conflicting, due to the fact that our population was derived so largely from the various warring countries, they were preponderantly on the side of the Allies. There were the bonds of kinship, culture, history and tradition that predisposed the great majority of Americans toward the British. There was the sentimentalized gratitude toward France for its aid in our Revolutionary War. There was compassion for downtrodden Belgium without the knowledge of the bilateral responsibility involved, a compassion sedulously cultivated by the faked atrocity stories of the Allied propaganda.

In the matter of propaganda the Allies had enormous advantages. Great Britain completely controlled the trans-Atlantic cables, and Germany was able to make but little use of the wireless. Hence nearly all our information, and our much more voluminous misinformation, about the war came either from or through the British propaganda service, which operated on both sides of the Atlantic with the greatest adroitness and

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most remarkable success. With unlimited resources behind it, with agencies unsurpassed in the art of pragmatic mendacity, and with abounding coöperation in this country, it insidiously exploited the credulity of the American public. It graciously furnished free of charge weekly “information,” with its own interpretation, to 360 American newspapers, mostly in the smaller cities and towns. In the metropolitan areas it had only to coöperate in most cases with editors already fervently pro-Ally. It gave colorful material of its own emotional slant to the “movies”; it furnished the “facts,” and interpretations if desired, to innumerable writers and speakers of pro-Ally persuasions; it even utilized such agencies as colleges, universities, clubs, and Y.M.C.A.’s, and churches.

It was well recognized in belligerent circles that propaganda was almost as important in war as armies and navies. The peoples of the warring countries must be stirred to their utmost endeavors; and those of the neutral world, especially in countries important as sources of supplies and possibly of military aid, must be sedulously wooed. The real causes of the war — antagonistic national and imperial ambitions, trade rivalries, opposing alliances, militarism, navalism, jingoism, profiteering cupidity, and the stupid blundering of diplomats — must be obscured or ignored in so far as they applied to one’s own country and its allies. These must be made to appear quite blameless as to the origin

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of the war and altogether righteous in their objectives as to its outcome. On the other hand, the enemy must be pictured in the most diabolical guise. Whether personified, as in the case of the satanized Kaiser, or generalized, as in the concept of all German soldiers being wantonly cruel and rapacious, the enemy must appear crazed by insatiable lust for plunder and power. Such concepts were necessary, first, to make it appear credible that so horrible a war could have been deliberately plotted and ruthlessly prosecuted; second, to stir the wrath of civilians at home and troops at the front to the murderous intensity demanded in war; and third, to enlist the sympathies of neutrals.<sup>11</sup>

Aside from the revolutionary masses in Russia, the subject nationalities of Austria-Hungary and of the Ottoman Empire, and a few incorrigibles in all countries involved, the warring peoples were easily stirred to frenzy by such rantings. In the Central Powers the effect was weakened and finally undermined by the counter-propaganda of the Allies after Wilson became its spokesman.

If the propaganda was slower in capturing the more insulated American mind it finally obtained as sure a grip here as in the countries of its origin. If Americans found European politics inscrutable, they were inclined to regard it as suspect. Although the great majority of our publicists from the first leaned strongly toward the Allies, they did not readily accept the dogma of sole



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German responsibility. Even those who later became the most rabid “Hun”-baiters held for a while that both sides were to blame and sought only to cast the *major* blame upon the Central Powers — and upon Russia. There was wide recognition of the clash of nationalist and militarist rivalries and a general tendency to attribute the crisis to the megalomania of three “autocratic” emperors aligned on either side. With virtual unanimity the press and the country rejoiced in the thought that we were entirely dissociated from the struggle and protected by three thousand miles of ocean barrier. This was the position for a while of such militarists as Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, as well as of such papers as the *New York Sun*.

Gradually, however, the overwhelming superiority of the Allied propaganda bore results — results so profound and so lasting that millions of Americans to this day are harboring and transmitting to oncoming generations its falsehoods and distortions. Even since the pre-war archives of imperial Russia, Germany, and Austria have been thrown open to the world by revolutionary governments, and, from these and other sources, historians have found that responsibility for the war was divided and that such “atrocities” as actually occurred were likewise divided; the author has had great difficulty in convincing mature students who are teachers in the public schools of these facts. In extension and summer session classes, attended by such

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teachers in several states, he has found the same obstinate bias and the same credence of war-time stories.

In this country as elsewhere the propaganda technique of the Allies was superb. It acted under cover and appeared to the public as Gospel Truth. In time it convinced the great majority that the war had resulted from a deep, dark plot of the rulers and "war lords" of the Central Powers — mainly of the Kaiser — to enslave the world. The myth of the "Potsdam Conference," at which the plot was alleged to have been hatched, and which has since been fully discredited, was not spread until 1917; but the general idea was current long before. The fact that Germany was the first of the Great Powers to declare war against others seemed *prima facie* evidence that she was mostly, if not wholly, to blame for the consequences. Unaware of the intricate forces behind her acts, especially those that were hidden, the many who preferred to entertain this view gave scant attention to the fact that the Central Powers had been caught, as in a vise, between hostile Powers mobilizing against them from either side. On the basis of such credulity and bias the pro-Ally propaganda found it easy to establish "the myth of a guilty nation." <sup>12</sup>

To prove such wickedness on the part of Germany, the Allies were able to bring an overwhelming weight of "evidence." Germany's violation of Belgian neutrality, for example. Cartoons in this country showed

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the Kaiser's mailed fist smashing through that “sacred” document as a “scrap of paper.” It now appears that the “sacred” document had been violated, in prospect, by Belgium herself, in connivance with France and Britain, long before. If Germany had chosen the impossible course through Alsace-Lorraine, the French would almost certainly have slipped through Belgium from behind and encircled the German army. Germany was aware of this, but the fact that the outside world was ignorant of it made her course appear to be governed by an utterly wanton disregard of sacred treaties and of the rights of humanity.

And there were the “atrocities” stories — avidly devoured in this country with the most naïve credulity. They have all been discredited since, but how many Americans, even yet, are aware of the fact? At any rate, they served their purpose at the time. They convinced the Great Unwary of the “satanism” of Germany.

Some of the yarns were spread mainly by grape-vine gossip. Who of us whose memories go back to that era does not recall having heard, from a neighborhood gossip or a traveling salesman, that some philanthropic gentleman — name unremembered — in a neighboring town had adopted one of the poor little Belgian boys whose hands had been cut off by the brutal German soldiers to make sure he would never bear arms against the Fatherland. Such cases were believed to be general

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but were actually non-existent. Other stories, such as that of the crucified Canadian and the much-raped and finally crucified Red Cross nurse, proved also to be lies out of whole cloth.<sup>13</sup>

Another type of tale arose from some innocent statement of an innocent fact, later distorted, by degrees, for propaganda purposes. It was announced in the German press that carcasses (of horses) were being utilized for lubricating oil, soap, and fertilizer. The Northcliffe press, shrewdly translating the word *Kadaver* as "corpse," made it appear that the bodies of the German dead were so used, and thus a gullible public was further convinced that German brutality knew no bounds. The national anthem, "Germany Over All," which simply means, as in other national anthems, "My country first of all," was made to mean "Germany must rule over all."<sup>14</sup>

But the prize story of such propaganda was that of the Belgian priests who were said to have been used as human clappers to ring out the tidings that Antwerp had fallen. It started with an innocent statement in the *Kölnische Zeitung* that "When the fall of Antwerp got to be known, the church bells were rung" (as a celebration in Germany). Repeated in the *Paris Matin* it appeared that "According to the *Kölnische Zeitung*, the clergy of Antwerp were compelled to ring the church bells when the fortress was taken." Crossing the Channel, it appeared in the *London Times*: "According to



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what *Le Matin* has heard from Cologne, the Belgian priests who refused to ring the church bells when Antwerp was taken have been driven away from their places.” Flashed over to Italy, it appeared in *Corriere della Sera* that the unfortunate priests had been “sentenced to hard labor.” When it finally completed the circuit and came back to *Le Matin* it read: “According to information to the *Corriere della Sera*, from Cologne via London, it is confirmed that the barbaric conquerors of Antwerp punished the unfortunate Belgian priests for their heroic refusal to ring the church bells by hanging them with their heads down as living clappers to the bells.”<sup>16</sup> And in this final form the story was swallowed by millions of Americans.

Aside from a relatively small minority, most of whom were as badly biased the other way around, and a scant few who remained more or less objective, Americans came to accept without question all that was favorable to the Allies and to condemn all contrary reports as “German propaganda.” The Germans maintained, to be sure, an ardent propaganda service, but it was stupidly conducted and often turned as a boomerang against them.

Thus psychological forces in this country were shaped to the side of the Allies.

But that did not mean that we were ready to do battle for them. We may have rejoiced over their reputed vic-

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tories and prayed for their ultimate triumph. We certainly rejoiced over their war orders and the "prosperity" which they brought. But actually entering the slaughter was another question. Probably a majority in the industrial East was exhilarated to the point of being ready to send our boys to the front, if this proved necessary to insure an Allied victory, but the South and West remained, at most, well-wishers toward the Entente. The country as a whole did not want war. That was clear.

Pacific sentiment for years had been more potent and widespread in the United States than in the land of any other Great Power, despite the fact that the country had, upon occasions, used force in dealing with its weaker neighbors. American philanthropists had donated millions for the furtherance of pacific activities. The country had taken a leading part in all movements toward conciliation, arbitration and the limitation of armaments. On the very eve of the war, Secretary Bryan had obtained treaties of arbitration with fifteen Powers, pledging the peaceful settlement of all disputes with them "of whatever character." (It so happened that none of these pacts was with any of the Central Powers.) Various religious organizations had zealously cultivated pacific sentiment. Unfortunately, however, too little attention had been given to the basic causes of war.

During the period of our "neutrality," as we have

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indicated, the peace forces were handicapped on the one hand by the pro-Ally propaganda and on the other by the suspiciously ardent backing of pro-German groups. Finally, many were led astray by militarists who promised *permanent* peace through the destruction of *German* militarism.

The forces which operated most powerfully to involve the country in the war were economic. From the start the Allies were able, thanks to their enormous naval superiority, to keep open the avenues of trade to their shores and to isolate their enemies almost completely. Hence, before the war was a year old, we were developing an immensely thriving and profitable trade with Great Britain and her allies and were almost completely shut off from the Central Powers. In another year or so, this trade was mounting well up into the billions and was stimulating an artificial prosperity such as the country had never before dreamed of. While producers of munitions profited most, every element of the population was vibrant, for the time, with economic well-being.

Such prosperity, depending as it did on the success of the Allies, came to involve a huge indebtedness on their part to American financiers, and hence created in this country a huge vested interest. What if the Allies should lose and be unable to pay their obligations! They *must not* lose! (It was assumed of course that if they won

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they would pay.) We should remind ourselves at this point that these obligations were privately held until after the country entered the war; that they were then taken over by the Federal Government, in exchange for Liberty bonds, so that the risk was transferred to the taxpayers; and that the country proceeded to send many times their amount of good money after bad. By thus enabling one side to inflict a crushing defeat upon the other and to dictate an impossible peace, we made the situation infinitely worse overseas and, ultimately, at home.

This huge financial stake was incurred by gradual and covert — even stealthy — advances. The trade did not reach large proportions until well into the year 1915, and Great Britain was quite able to meet her obligations to American firms in the early months of the war. Some of her allies wanted loans but at that time were given no encouragement. Even in the case of Britain, however, as in that of any other country which was able to pay, there was the question of facilitating exchange by means of short-term credits. Since these for a while could be settled when due, it was claimed that they were not actually loans. But inevitably, if the war continued long enough, the Allied governments would run short of available cash and such credits would have to be funded by means of long-term loans if the trade were to continue. We should then be faced with the alternative of permitting such loans to be floated in this coun-



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try or of seeing this rapidly growing trade shut off and finding alluring prosperity turned into gloomy depression.

What actually happened behind the scenes — how the Administration was persuaded by financial interests, first, to permit short term credits merely to facilitate a trade that was on little short of a cash basis; how this trade brought us to the corner where Prosperity was actually in sight; and how, finally, the Administration was persuaded to sanction the one means of attaining the glamorous, if illusive, goddess — was not fully known to the American public until it was revealed by the Nye Committee in the winter of 1935-36.

It now appears that Secretary Bryan wrote to Wilson in the second week of the war that the banking firm of J. P. Morgan and Company had inquired “whether there would be any objection to its making a loan to the French Government.” Bryan strongly advised against such a course, giving as his reasons: (1) that “money is the worst of all contrabands because it commands everything else”; (2) if loans were permitted to one side they would have to be permitted to the other, and the tense conflict of sympathies in this country would be multiplied through conflicting vested interests; and (3) “the powerful financial interests which would be connected with these loans would be tempted to use their influence through the newspapers to support the government to which they had loaned.” Bryan added in a

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postscript that Lansing, his counsellor, who was then evidently less biased than he later became, "calls attention to the fact that an American citizen who goes abroad and voluntarily enlists in the army of a belligerent nation loses the protection of his citizenship while so engaged, and asks why dollars, going abroad and engaging in war should be more protected." <sup>16</sup>

After conferring with Wilson, Bryan placed a ban on all loans to belligerent Powers, as "inconsistent with the true spirit of neutrality." Had Wilson only persisted in this course!

Two months later the National City Bank importuned the Department of State to sanction short-term credits to belligerents "to stimulate the unprecedented and unusual buying now being made in this country by foreign governments." Belligerents simply could not finance their huge purchases on a strictly cash basis, and if such credits were not granted, "the buying power of these foreign purchasers will dry up and the business will go to Australia, Canada, and elsewhere." A potent argument indeed!

This time it was Lansing rather than Bryan, who took the matter up with Wilson. (Bryan was away on a speaking tour, but it seems that even he had been converted by the bankers to the necessity of short-term credits.) The whole procedure was clandestine. The American people never knew what happened until the facts were revealed by the Nye Committee. Lansing

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by devious means made it known to the prospective creditors that he had “gathered” from the Administration that there was a “decided difference” between long-term loans and short-term credits to facilitate trade, hence, inferentially, that credits were not barred. And there, though the country was unaware of it, grave trouble began.

Such “credits” sufficed for about a year. Then the financial status of the Allies required long-term loans. Credits were piling up and would have to be funded. By this time Bryan was out and Lansing was head of the Department of State. He, Colonel House, and Secretary McAdoo were besought by the bankers to use their influence with Wilson to permit such loans. It was represented as a question of granting these loans and maintaining the alluring prosperity, or refusing them and plunging into black depression. The proceedings were more clandestine than before. Arrangements were made whereby Lansing wired the bankers in code when the President’s consent was obtained.

And so the die was cast. We would build up a huge vested interest in the triumph of the Allies — with “prosperity” and billions of dollars at stake.

Let Wilson speak for himself.

Questioned shortly after the war by Senator McCumber of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he was asked:

“Do you think that if Germany had committed no act

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of war or no act of injustice against our citizens we would have gotten into the war?"

"I think so," replied Wilson.

"You think that we would have gotten in anyway?"

"I do." <sup>17</sup>

Of course the question may be raised as to what would have happened if Wilson had persistently refused to permit such loans. Would the lure of a profitable trade, thus obstructed, have overwhelmed all pacific and isolationist sentiment in the country and brought a political overturn in 1916, presuming that the Republicans would have taken a definite pro-business and pro-Ally stand? Who can say? Certainly it would have been much easier to have maintained such a neutral course from the start, before inflation set in, than to have established it afterward. Furthermore, the strength of anti-war sentiment was not fully registered in the election of 1916. The pro-German vote, which would have gone to Wilson if he had been more genuinely neutral, went against him; as did the vote of many others who were wary of the belligerent trends of his policies.

While we are speculating on what might have been, let us suppose that Wilson had been as neutral in his attitude as La Follette or Kitchin, that he had treated both "blockades" alike, that he had given both sides to understand at every turn that no aid could be expected from this country. Is it not likely that, under these con-



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ditions, a negotiated peace would have been under way by the autumn of 1916? At any rate, a more neutral policy with reference to blockades might have solved the submarine issue.

With these factors in mind, is it not as illogical to say (as some of our notable historians have said) that Germany's submarine campaign was the *cause* of our going to war, as to say that the murder of the Archduke was the *cause* of the European conflict?

During the first nine months of the war it was Britain rather than Germany whose high-handed policies most grievously interfered with our European contacts. Says T. W. Gregory, Attorney-General in Wilson's cabinet:

“Up to the time that Germany began its atrocious submarine warfare culminating in the *Lusitania*, we had less cause for complaint against her than we had against Great Britain; the latter had repeatedly seized on the high seas our vessels bound for neutral ports; it had appropriated these vessels and their cargoes; it had opened our mail and prevented its delivery; it had ignored our protests and in some instances had for weeks and months even failed to acknowledge their receipt.”

Because of the fact that products consigned to neutral countries adjacent to Germany might later be shipped across the border, arbitrary restrictions and limitations were placed upon such shipments from one

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neutral to another. This became highly injurious to large agricultural groups in this country as well as to industrial ones.

In the spring of 1915 Kitchin received letters from exporters of tobacco complaining of Britain's interference with their trade in the Netherlands and requesting that he take the matter up with the Department of State. This he did. The Foreign Trade Adviser replied that the Department had cabled the American Minister at The Hague and had been informed that the restriction whereby all tobacco imported into the Netherlands, except that from the Dutch colonies, "must be consigned to Netherlands Oversea Trust and may not be exported to belligerent countries . . . is not discrimination made by Netherlands Government but *modus vivendi* arranged by Allies with Oversea Trust."<sup>18</sup> This was rather cold comfort. The Dutch Government had acquiesced in this arrangement, demanded by the British, and our exporters must take the consequences. True, a protest was made to Britain as early as March 30, 1915; but its edge was taken off by Ambassador Page, and nothing came of it.

Until the late summer of 1915 Kitchin was patient about the matter and hopeful that the Administration would take more vigorous and more effective action. "I believe that the President is going to show a firm hand finally," he wrote a correspondent, "but thus far

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he has not ‘spoken out in meeting’ to her as resolutely and as clearly as I had hoped. We are in a position to force Great Britain to just and rightful terms and we ought to do it.”<sup>19</sup>

When cotton, already the most depressed of all American products, was placed on the contraband list just as the harvest season was approaching, the cotton growers were apparently faced with a disaster comparable to the one they had experienced the preceding season. Then Kitchin “spoke out in meeting.” “The cotton producers of North Carolina and the entire South are aroused over the action of Great Britain in declaring cotton contraband,” he said, “and they want the Administration to be as emphatic in dealing with England on this score as it has been in dealing with Germany over others. . . .”<sup>20</sup> Otherwise, he said, there was likely to be a move in Congress for an embargo, and he believed that even a threat of this would bring results.

Representative E. Yates Webb, chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, informed Kitchin that he had written to Secretary Daniels that it was “high time for our Government to issue a note of protest to England against her unlawful blockade and unlawful seizures of our commerce, which has been going on for the last ten months, and also against her placing cotton on the contraband list.” He pointed out that Great Britain herself had forced Russia to admit cotton to Japan in 1905, on the ground that the great bulk of it was used

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for civilian necessities. He also referred to the fact that the Declaration of London had placed cotton on the free list and had provided that no change should be made in the contraband list without twelve years' notice.\* <sup>21</sup>

Kitchin replied: "I am certainly gratified to know of your strong position in favor of a big protest to Great Britain. You can count on my coöperation with you to the fullest extent. I will have to go to Washington one day next week and I am going to talk with some of the Administration folks about the matter." <sup>22</sup>

But his talk was of no avail. The "big protest," in the sense in which he used the term, never came.

At this juncture the Greensboro *Daily News* published a series of highly intelligent and timely editorials, in general commending Kitchin's position. The gist of them was: The Administration had been obsequiously zealous to please our British "cousins." It had asked in effect, What can we do for you? Lend you a billion to buy our munitions? Certainly. The submarine menace? Give us time and we'll put a stop to that. No wonder Lord Northcliffe had said that we might be more valuable to the Allies as a "neutral" than as a belligerent. As the former we should have an advantage in getting munitions to them; as the latter we might be embarrassing at the peace conference. On the other hand, concluded the *News*, the President's "strict accountability"

\* Great Britain had signed the Declaration of London, as had other interested Powers, but it had not been ratified, and Britain had refused to be bound by it.



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position on the submarine question was inevitably leading us toward war. Not as fast, it said, as the “impatient [New York] *Tribune*” and its European correspondent, Frank Simonds, desired, but relentlessly nevertheless.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile Germany, in a desperate effort to offset the grave handicap imposed upon her by the British “blockade,” had resorted to a type of submarine blockade unrecognized by international law. As submarines were at a hopeless disadvantage if they sought to comply with the rules established for cruiser warfare, and as no rules with reference to them had ever been agreed upon, Germany resorted to an *ipse dixit*, as Britain had done in other fields.

On February 4, 1915, she declared the waters surrounding the British Isles a “war zone,” and warned that, after two weeks notice, enemy merchant ships found in these waters would be destroyed, “without its always being possible to avert the dangers threatening the crews and passengers.” In other words such ships were likely to be sunk without warning; at least, without specific warning at the moment of attack. For Germany held that this declaration was a blanket warning in advance. “Even neutral ships are exposed to dangers in the war zone,” the proclamation added, “as, in view of the misuse of neutral flags ordered on January 31 by the British Government and of the accidents of naval warfare, we cannot always avoid strik-

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ing neutral ships in attacks that are directed against enemy ships." It was explained shortly afterward that "German submarines and warships will endeavor by every means in their power to avoid . . . a mistake being made."<sup>24</sup>

In further explanation of Germany's position, Count Johann von Bernstorff, German Ambassador to the United States, said that his government had been "compelled to resort to this kind of warfare by the murderous methods of British naval warfare, which aim at the destruction of legitimate neutral trade and the starvation of the German people." He declared that Germany was ready to agree not to sink without warning if Great Britain would agree to let foodstuffs enter Germany for the use of the civilian population.<sup>25</sup>

Six days after the German note was dispatched, Wilson directed a reply politely but solemnly warning Germany of the perils of her proposed course. "The Government of the United States," he said . . . "feels it to be its duty to call the attention of the Imperial German Government, with sincere respect and the most friendly sentiments but very candidly and earnestly, to the very serious possibilities of the course of action apparently contemplated under that proclamation." He warned that American lives and property might be destroyed. "If such a deplorable situation should arise," the United States would hold Germany "to a strict accountability for such acts" and "take any steps it

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might be necessary to take to safeguard American lives and property and to secure to American citizens the full enjoyment of their acknowledged rights on the high seas.”<sup>26</sup>

On the same day Wilson directed a note to Great Britain. Not with reference to her violations of our “acknowledged rights on the high seas,” but with reference to her misuse of our flag. The difference in the tone of the two notes was impressive. The mildness of the note to Britain is explainable, of course, on the ground that it dealt with an isolated phase of the major controversy, an offense, *per se*, far less grave than the one threatened by Germany. Wilson acknowledged to Britain that something might be said for the occasional use of a neutral flag by the ship of a belligerent power as a *ruse de guerre*. This had formerly been done upon occasions with impunity. But he questioned the right of a government to authorize it as a general practice, and trusted that the British Government would do all in its power to restrain such misuse.<sup>27</sup> The note was as ineffectual as were others to the same government.

The reaction of our press to the controversy at this time was, with exceptions, remarkably dispassionate as compared with that which was soon to develop. America was widely represented as the “innocent bystander” endangered by stray blows from either side. *Both* sides, said one editor, “are coming to treat neutral nations more and more as rank and impudent out-

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siders." The Chicago *Tribune* said mildly, "Half the world is desperate and the other half perplexed."

On the morning of May 1 the dailies of the country carried the following advertisement adjacent to their travel and shipping announcements:

"NOTICE

"TRAVELERS intending to embark on the Atlantic voyage are reminded that a state of war exists between Germany and her allies and Great Britain and her allies; that the zone of war includes the waters adjacent to the British Isles; that in accordance with formal notice given by the Imperial German Government, vessels flying the flag of Great Britain, or any of her allies, are liable to destruction in any of those waters, and that travelers sailing in the war zone on the ships of Great Britain or her allies do so at their own risk.

IMPERIAL GERMAN EMBASSY,  
Washington, D.C., Apr. 22, 1915.

The afternoon following the publication of this notice the great Cunard liner, *Lusitania*, was to leave New York for England. Would prospective passengers dare embark? The *Lusitania* was not only a British ship but was registered as a British auxiliary cruiser, and was carrying great quantities of highly explosive munitions in its hold. This very fact made it technically



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unlawful in this country for it to carry passengers. Very few were deterred, however, for it was felt that no submarine commander would dare attack a vessel with so large a cargo of American life and property. Even if it were torpedoed, its elaborate equipment of water-tight compartments would presumably keep it afloat for a safe period. No one considered the menace of the explosives in its hold.

A week later, as the *Lusitania* rounded Ireland, just seven miles from shore, it was suddenly rent by two successive explosions, which sank it in a surprisingly short time. Of its human freight, numbering almost two thousand, nearly twelve hundred were lost, including one hundred and fourteen American citizens.

What to do? The country was grievously shocked, but in the main it kept an even keel. Millions excitedly discussed the matter, pro and con, and the press was divided; but a highly vocal minority shouted for drastic action. From the standpoint of propaganda this was the turning point. Numbers of pro-Ally papers and various eminent individuals came out for extreme measures, though relatively few called for immediate war. “Dastardly,” said the *New York Sun*, “is the word on millions of American lips.” It was “inconceivable,” said Theodore Roosevelt, “that we should refrain from taking action in the matter.”<sup>28</sup>

As to the *Lusitania*, a number of vital questions arose which were ultimately answered with more or less

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certainty. She was built with the aid of a government subsidy and was registered as an auxiliary cruiser, but, after having served for a time in the British navy, had been released for commercial service. Probably her cargo of munitions produced the second disastrous explosion. Her destruction was not specifically premeditated. The fact that the warning of the German Embassy appeared in the press on the morning of her sailing was accidental, as was the fact that a submarine commander sighted her at the fatal moment.<sup>29</sup>

*Was she armed?* Apparently not. Strenuous efforts were made by pro-Germans to prove that she was, but all testimony to that effect turned out to be perjured. It is interesting to note, in view of subsequent developments, how large this question loomed at the time.<sup>30</sup>

Wilson's first note to Germany regarding the matter assumed that the act was unauthorized and would be speedily disavowed, with assurances that it would not be repeated. He argued the point that submarines must conform to the rules of cruiser warfare or cease to operate. Germany replied courteously, but contested this point. Then Wilson sent a more threatening note. Bryan refused to sign it and, rather than do so, resigned his position as Secretary of State.

In Germany's reply to the second note she indicated that she was ready to comply with Wilson's demands if Britain were required to cease her unlawful interception of the necessities of life for the German popu-

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lation. To this Wilson replied: “The Imperial German Government will readily understand that the Government of the United States cannot discuss the policy of the Government of Great Britain with regard to neutral trade except with that Government itself, and that it must regard the conduct of other belligerent governments as irrelevant to any discussion with the Imperial German Government of what this Government regards as grave and unjustifiable violations of the rights of American citizens by German naval commanders.”

Was it irrelevant? Bryan thought not. Early in the controversy, while he was still in the Cabinet, he had insisted that protests be sent to Great Britain as strong as those to Germany, and that economic pressure be employed. Consistency demanded it; also fairness and the maintenance of peaceful relations. But Wilson was obdurate. Germany's case must be kept isolated. The submarine destroyed human lives; the British blockade only interfered with material interests. On the other hand, it was argued that the suffering and death produced in Germany by the interception of food, medicine, and other necessities was quite as cruel as the grim toll of the submarines. Besides, ships that were sunk were carrying munitions for the slaughter of Germans on the battlefields. The inhumanity of the submarine was simply more obvious. But this argument was damned as “pro-German.” Bryan, of course, was

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branded as a "pro-German" and as a "pacifist." Shortly before he resigned as Secretary of State, rather than sign the second *Lusitania* note, with its implications of war unless Germany yielded, he accused Wilson, in full Cabinet meeting, of pro-Ally bias. He was promptly rebuked. Wilson's attitude toward Britain was increasingly "meek and mild," and was so characterized by more than one member of his Cabinet.<sup>21</sup> His confidential agent, Colonel House, as we now know, secretly assured the governments of Great Britain and France that the President's policies were designed to help them win the war and that the more hard-pressed they became, the stronger we would stand by them. This was our righteous neutrality! The German Government did not know of all this, nor did Congressional leaders; but the manifestations of bias in Administration policies were all too obvious.

During the *Lusitania* controversy in the summer of 1915, Kitchin seems to have refrained from public criticism of Wilson's position. Congress was not in session; and if it had been, it would hardly have considered any action with reference to the submarine question at that time, though it probably would have considered an embargo on munitions and possibly efforts to prevent loans to belligerents. Such measures would apparently have had the approval of the majority of the members; but how many would actually have voted for them in the face of Presidential opposi-



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tion is quite another question. Kitchin discussed publicly at that time only the imperative demand to curb Great Britain. He was besought by the press for his views on the occasion of Bryan's resignation, but he refused to make any comment.<sup>82</sup> It is known that his sympathies were with Bryan, though at first he seems not to have been as keenly aware as was the Secretary of State of the likelihood that the President's policies would lead us to war. However, when the submarine controversy was revived in February, 1916, over the question whether *armed* merchantmen were lawfully subject to attack without warning, and when Wilson took a stand that was extreme, apparently untenable, and certainly dangerous, Kitchin was one of the foremost in the fight to force a modification of the President's policy.

Prior to that time Wilson himself had not held that armed ships should be immune from attack without warning. "It is hardly fair," he had written Colonel House in October, 1915, "to ask submarine commanders to give warning by summons if, when they approach as near as they must for that purpose, they are to be fired upon."<sup>83</sup> Once the submarine made its presence known within range, a shot from the merchantman could send it to Davy Jones before it could submerge and fire a torpedo. Hence if merchant vessels were permitted to go armed and were guaranteed against surprise attacks, the submarine — Germany's

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only effective weapon on the seas — would be rendered ineffective. The Administration was aware of this and, since the Allies had begun arming all their ships, it expected a controversy over the question.

On January 18, 1916, Secretary Lansing sent notes to the Entente Embassies in Washington saying, "My Government is seriously impressed with the reasonableness of the argument that a merchant vessel carrying an armament of any sort, in view of the character of submarine warfare and the defensive weakness of undersea craft, should be held to be an auxiliary cruiser and so treated by a neutral as well as a belligerent Government and is seriously considering instructing its officials accordingly."<sup>24</sup> A few days later he proposed to belligerents on both sides a sort of gentlemen's agreement. The Central Powers were to cross their hearts, — and not their fingers — to sink no merchantmen without warning; the Allies were sweetly to promise that their freight and passenger boats would go unarmed and would politely stop when signalled. The Central Powers were quick to give this proposal their blessing; the Allies were equally quick to give it damnation.<sup>25</sup>

A cablegram from Page said that Sir Edward Grey was more disturbed than he had been since Britain's ultimatum to Germany at the outbreak of the war. Such a proposition was regarded by the British Foreign Office as "wholly in favor of Germany and . . . wholly

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against the Allies.”<sup>36</sup> On the other hand Lansing had previously said: “If a merchantman is armed, and we insist that submarines do not sink without warning, the advantage is all with the merchantmen and against the submarine.”<sup>37</sup> Lansing was right; yet Grey was also right, in the sense that the proposed plan would tend to deprive the Allies of an advantage which they had come to hold. From the standpoint of principle rather than policy, however, it may well be argued that the plan was much fairer and more in accordance with international law than the existing arrangement.

Historians have wondered how Wilson, with his strong pro-Ally bias, could have permitted Lansing to make such a proposal. According to Professor John Bassett Moore, he was said to have given his approval “on a train at high speed.” Whether the “high speed” applied to the train or to the President, Professor Moore says he does not know. At any rate, in the furor which followed, Wilson “refused to claim the baby.”

In Washington the representatives of the Allies, official and unofficial, flew to the bosoms of militant Republican Congressmen, relieved their pent-up emotions, and furnished their consolders with inspiration for impassioned diatribes. Rumors were spread that in case the proposal were adopted Allied merchantmen would virtually disappear from American ports and the country would lose the greater part of its flourishing trade. Thus a rising boom would be turned into

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panic and depression. And a mighty argument was that! <sup>38</sup>

But it was Germany that forced the issue. Untactfully, it appears. At least her move was apparently ill-timed. She suddenly announced that "enemy merchantmen armed with guns no longer have the right to be considered as peaceable vessels of commerce. Therefore the German naval forces will receive orders, in a short period, paying consideration to the interests of neutrals, to treat such vessels as belligerents."

A few days later Wilson fired back. He would hold the Central Powers to the same "strict accountability" for attacks upon armed merchantmen as had formerly been agreed upon with reference to those unarmed. International law, according to his interpretation, gave such vessels the right to carry armament for *defense* and still afforded them the protection of warning and provision for the safety of passengers and crew. This position was declared untenable by no less an authority on the subject than John Bassett Moore, former Counsellor in Wilson's own Department of State. This fact leaked out through the New York *Evening Post*. The ardent patriot, Hamilton Fish, Jr. was responsible for the *faux pas*. Some reporter got hold of the fact that Fish had wired to Mann and Longworth: "Thought you would like to know that John Bassett Moore is opposed to President Wilson on the question of armed merchantmen, on the ground that a submarine is a



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belligerent warship and has the right of visit and search and that guns on merchantmen are for the purpose of defending themselves against the given right of visit and search. He believes in warning Americans.”<sup>39</sup>

Professor Moore has recently confirmed and elaborated this position. “I recall as if it were yesterday,” he says, “what happened when it was suggested here that armed merchantmen should be put under belligerent restrictions. The British Government, or some of its spokesmen, suggested that, if we did this, British ships would cease to come to our ports, and that we should have to send everything to Halifax. Immediately we ran to cover and submitted. I could not help wondering whether there was any limit to our credulity and subserviency. Of course I do not blame the British Government. They were not charged with the maintenance of the independence and honor of the United States. Their hands were full in taking care of themselves. But I cannot forget the fact that the little Kingdom of the Netherlands, small in territory and population, but governed by a loyal Queen, under the advice of patriotic and capable men, put armed merchantmen on the same footing and under the same restrictions as men of war, in accordance with the law that had immemorially prevailed, as declared by our own Supreme Court, through John Marshall, the great Chief Justice, in the case of the *Nereide*, 9 Cranch, 388. Of Marshall’s opinion in this famous case a garbled

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version was got out here (in 1916), a version so false as to constitute practically a forgery; but it was widely disseminated and was used in speeches even in Congress. I repeat that this version practically involved forgery, because it omitted from Marshall's opinion the passage in which it was declared that the ship, by reason of the fact that she was armed, was to be regarded as 'an open and declared belligerent, claiming all the rights, and subject to all the dangers of the belligerent character.'

"Into the motives of what was done," Professor Moore continued, "I do not propose to enter. Whether they proceeded from a want of knowledge or from some other cause, the result was just the same. By the position actually taken, the United States was committed, while professing to be a neutral, to maintain a belligerent position."<sup>40</sup>

Wilson sought strenuously to distinguish between arms for defense and for offense. Defensive armament, he held, was permissive and did not affect the unarmed status. But there remained the embarrassing question: If an armed merchantman sighted a submarine within range, would it wait for a challenge, or any hostile move, before firing? Or would it shoot on sight? James W. Gerard, our Ambassador to Germany, had answered this question: "It seems to me to be an absurd proposition that a submarine must come to the surface, give warning, offer to put passengers and crew in

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safety, and constitute itself a target for merchant ships, that not only make a practice of firing at submarines at sight, but have undoubtedly received orders to do so.”<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile, on Capitol Hill, recognition that the new policy of the Administration was legally indefensible and would tend to draw us into the war gave rise to powerful opposition within the ranks of the President's own party. Resolutions were introduced in both Houses to the effect that Americans be warned not to travel on the armed ships of belligerent Powers and that those who insisted upon doing so be left to their own risk. The Democratic leaders in both Houses were in favor of such a resolution, and they declared that two-thirds of the members — four-fifths if war were the imminent alternative — favored such a resolution.<sup>42</sup> This caused the greatest breach that Wilson ever had with the members of his own party in Congress.

Congress was rebellious; the President was obdurate. On February 21, 1916, he called into conference from the Senate and the House the majority leaders and the chairmen of the Committees on foreign affairs: Senators Kern and Stone and Representatives Kitchin and Flood. All were present except Kitchin, who was detained by other duties. The meeting was described as “stormy.” “Perhaps the President talked too frankly,” said David Lawrence in the New York

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*Evening Post*, "or those who saw him were somewhat indiscreet, but little by little the strong words of the President got back to Congress generally and yesterday afternoon there was a flurry." <sup>43</sup> *Flurry* was not the word. *Revolt* it was mildly called in the *Times*, which reported: "Veteran legislators said tonight that not for many years had they seen a situation so dramatic and sensational." Democratic and Progressive Republican Congressmen were meeting in excited conferences. <sup>44</sup>

When Kitchin learned of what had been said at the White House he asked at once for another group-conference with the President. In fact, White House conferences on the subject were almost daily, sometimes hourly, occurrences for a fortnight thereafter. <sup>45</sup> Wilson held that this was a matter to be decided by the Administration. Interference from Congress, and especially from within his own party, would weaken him at home, discredit him abroad, and hamper his dealings with Germany. <sup>46</sup> His conferees were equally insistent. They warned the President that his position was leading the country into the war. <sup>47</sup> He was said to have replied, though he denied it, that this might not be an undesirable course. <sup>48</sup> According to David Lawrence, the following conversation took place at one of these White House conferences which was attended by Clark and Kitchin: <sup>49</sup>

" 'Mr. President,' Speaker Clark inquired, 'sup-



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posing we do not warn Americans off armed belligerent ships and that a vessel is sunk and Americans lose their lives, what then?’

“‘I believe we should sever diplomatic relations,’ the President is quoted as having answered.

“‘Then what would happen?’

“‘Count von Bernstoff told Secretary Lansing that a break in diplomatic relations would be followed by a declaration of war by Germany.’”

What Wilson actually said may forever remain in doubt, but the impression which he gave to his conferees will not. “Confidentially,” wrote Kitchin, “I think the President is anxious for war with Germany — his sympathies are so strong with the Allies. . . . I fear the President is going to watch for the first opportunity to strike at Germany and involve this country in a world-wide war . . . It seems to me a crime against civilization and humanity for this Christian nation to plunge into the war and make a slaughter-house of the whole world.”<sup>50</sup> To another correspondent he declared, “It does seem to me that we sacrifice no national honor or American rights by simply warning our citizens not to take passage on armed merchantmen of belligerent nations.” He cited Great Britain’s warning to her subjects during the Russo-Japanese war and Wilson’s earlier position in the matter.<sup>51</sup> “I greatly fear that unless a resolution of warning is passed by Congress, the President will get us

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into war with Germany.”<sup>52</sup> To a constituent who urged an embargo on munitions he replied: “It is impossible to get an embargo resolution through the House or the Senate. The President is opposed to it. If he favored it, it would go through. Between us, you have seen enough to know that the President absolutely dominates Congress.”<sup>53</sup>

Is it possible that Wilson failed to perceive the inconsistency of his contention that he would permit not the slightest abridgment of American rights, when he was surely aware that Great Britain was abridging them daily; also his contention that we should lose our “honor and self-respect” and destroy all the “fine fabric” *et cetera* if he took the position with reference to armed ships which Marshall had taken, which many proud nations had taken — with no such loss, — and which apparently he himself had formerly regarded as right? Was this merely rationalization? Or was it camouflage of a deliberate move toward war, and propaganda to shape public sentiment? Evidently Kitchin and other Congressmen feared it was the latter. And their shocked surprise indicated that they had not formerly believed Wilson desirous of war. But now it appeared, to some of them at least, as Senator Stone wrote to the President, “that, after all, it may be possible that the program for preparedness, so called, has some relation to such a situation as we are now called upon to meet.”

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Wilson at first demanded that no warning resolution be permitted to come to the floor. He had several conferences with Senator Stone, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations in the Senate, and with Representative Flood, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the House. He seems to have urged upon them, first, that an open breach between the President and his Congress would certainly be unfavorable and possibly disastrous to the Democrats in the coming elections.<sup>54</sup> In fact, he was reported in the press to have said that he would refuse to be a candidate for reelection if Congress failed to support his position in this matter.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, such a split between the executive and legislative branches of our Government, especially within the ranks of the dominant party, would encourage Germany to further defiance and hence make war *more* likely than if Congress yielded to the President's leadership.<sup>56</sup> Whatever merit these arguments may have possessed, they had carrying power. By February 24 it was reported that Flood had said that a warning resolution would not come from his committee.<sup>57</sup>

Suddenly the President changed his tactics. On February 29 he demanded that a warning resolution be voted upon in each House. He seems to have trusted what Kitchen had feared — that when he applied the full force of his political power and skill the majority of the Democratic members would “fling away their

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convictions and vote to please the President.”<sup>58</sup> His task was prodigious, for he was fighting against powerful convictions, but he had a number of advantages. With the overwhelming weight of the press of both parties on his side, with his power over patronage, and with his influence on Congressional constituencies, backed by the arguments of party solidarity in an election year and of the maintenance of his prestige in foreign diplomacy, it is scarcely surprising that many Congressmen wavered. Yet the issue remained in doubt for more than a week.

It is interesting to note how Republican papers, usually condemnatory of Wilson, fervidly came to his side in this matter, and how Democratic papers, prevailingly militant, damned all Democratic Congressmen who refused to take orders from the President.

“The scuttle resolution,” as it was dubbed by the *New York Herald*,<sup>59</sup> was “Congressional interference in diplomatic relations.”<sup>60</sup> It was the work of a conspiracy headed by the German Ambassador, von Bernstorff, and was “subofficered by William J. Bryan.”<sup>61</sup> In the House, the chief trouble-maker was Kitchin, as appeared under the heading, “LACK OF LEADERSHIP IN HOUSE BRINGS CHAOS.”<sup>62</sup> The Democratic *New York World*, assuming that the majority in Congress was with the Administration and that only a troublesome minority was opposed, declared: “The attitude of Congress has been questioned at home and abroad — at



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home by an impudent propaganda, half mercenary and half cowardly, and abroad by officials in Germany who profess to believe that the people of the United States are not in sympathy with their own Government. That this is a monstrous scandal can be proved and should be proved at once. The good Americanism, the good faith, the good sense of Congress have been challenged by a noisy group of its own members.”<sup>63</sup> But the *World* was just warming up. Either it lost this lovely faith in Congress overnight, or it decided to change its tack. “CONGRESS OR REICHSTAG?” it shouted.<sup>64</sup> “WILL CONGRESS HAUL DOWN THE FLAG?” A cartoon represented the House and the Senate as a pair of jumping-jacks, the string being pulled by the Kaiser.<sup>65</sup> “If Congress wishes to adopt these resolutions,” said the *World*, “let it have the courage of its cowardice.”<sup>66</sup> Streaming headlines announced that opposition to the President’s policies had been traced to German influence, the evidence being that several Congressmen who favored a warning resolution had been seen talking with men who were known to be pro-German.<sup>67</sup> Diabolical! To the editor of the *World* it was “UNSPEAKABLE.”<sup>68</sup> These warning resolutions were “in effect an indorsement of the sinking of the *Lusitania* and a repudiation of the action taken by the United States government in demanding disavowal, reparation and guarantees.” The conspiracy was all “PREARRANGED.” “Every white feather now on exhibition in the Amer-



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the penalties which he may expect. Such penalties give me neither pain nor humiliation.”<sup>75</sup>

Notable among the few papers that stood by Kitchin and his group was the Greensboro *Daily News*. At the height of the controversy it carried an editorial, “KITCHIN AND THE LEADERSHIP,” saying in part:

“The last ten days have seen a revival in still more vigorous and venomous terms of the assault on Claude Kitchin by the New York newspapers. They are demanding his resignation of the leadership in terms angrier and more imperative than ever before, basing it on the original grounds — namely, that he doesn’t lead.

“Some time since, the *Daily News* remarked that Mr. Kitchin did not appear to be doing much in the way of leading, for the simple but excellent reason that he was not going in the same direction the Administration had taken. He is still traveling in the same direction in which he started . . . whereas the President, and everybody the President could control, have turned completely around. We figured that Mr. Kitchin was not a leader because he lacks, not ability, but agility.

“But we are beginning to think that we must revise our reckoning. At least it seems now that they that be with Mr. Kitchin are more than they that be against him. Mr. Kitchin long ago selected a certain road, the Administration another; the majority of the members of the House seem to have taken Mr. Kitchin’s road.

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Yet the New York papers and the *Daily News* long ago made up their several and respective minds that Mr. Kitchin is not leading. Let us 'save face' then, as the Chinese say, by deciding that although Mr. Kitchin does not, will not, cannot lead, Congress obstinately insists upon following him." <sup>76</sup>

One of the sanest editorials that appeared in all that era of madness came out in the *Daily News* under the title "THE NATION'S HONOR AND THE PEOPLE'S BLOOD." To summarize: It was this concept of "national honor" that blinded the peoples of Europe to the acceptance of mass slaughter in 1914. They did not want it — none of them did. Even their rulers called heaven to witness that they had not willed it. Yet slaughter and be slaughtered they must, or lose that vague but "priceless" attribute. Of forces in the background the people were not told; it was a matter of "national honor" — and "national interest." "Now survey the ghastly scene." . . . Over here, as over there, the people did not want war; and "President Wilson says that, above all else, he desires peace. If unhappily war should come, he will call upon God to witness that he had not willed it." And yet we must accept it rather than sacrifice "what he, perhaps almost alone among our governing authorities, conceives to be in the issue last raised, national honor" — the right of Americans to travel through the war zone on the armed munition carriers of the warring Powers. "If America should ever go to war for any such cause



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as Mr. Wilson now seems to regard as adequate — if the Stone letter means what it says — the historian of the future would find less justification for our course than he would find for Italy. A measurably legitimate ‘honorable egotism’ would serve much better as a *casus belli*.” Certain Congressmen from North Carolina, the *Daily News* concluded, could preserve our honor without leading us to war.<sup>77</sup>

Conflicting counsel poured in upon Kitchin from all parts of the country but, mainly, as was natural, from his own state. “I believe the people of North Carolina want you to stand by the President in the present diplomatic crisis,” wrote the editor of the *Progressive Farmer*.<sup>78</sup> But the president of the state Farmers’ Union assured him that the majority were strongly in favor of a warning resolution.<sup>79</sup> “You will live to regret the course you are taking . . .” wired a textile manufacturer.<sup>80</sup> “Sober second thought of country against any course that will likely precipitate war,” wired George Fort Milton.<sup>81</sup> A considerable majority of these counsellors and petitioners approved Kitchin’s position. Tumulty holds that while some of the appeals to Congressmen for the passage of a warning resolution were doubtless from “devoted, patriotic Americans, it was clear to those of us who were on the inside of affairs that there lay back of this movement a sinister purpose on the part of German sympathizers.”<sup>82</sup> Kitchin, to whom this was not “clear,” was “on the inside of af-

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fairs" at the receiving end of the Avenue. Of the numerous telegrams, letters, and petitions which he received endorsing his position (now on file among his papers) all but a very few came from sources which were apparently above suspicion of sinister motives. Most of them came from communities largely or wholly free from aggressive or insidious German influences; from farmers and laborers, small-town merchants, ministers of the gospel, and others high and low — many of them known, directly or indirectly, to the author. They called merely for genuine and permanent neutrality.

It was said at the time, and has since been held by some, that the Democratic leaders who opposed Administration policies constituted a sort of cabal that was bent upon discrediting Wilson and his leadership. The available evidence does not indicate anything so insidious. In so far as there was a common bond among them, it arose from the fact that they were more or less like-minded in the pursuance of policies consistent in the main with those which the President himself had formerly advocated. They were all irritated at Wilson's uncompromising attitude and steam-roller tactics, but they scarcely desired to discredit the hope of their party to remain in power. True, there was talk in some circles of finding another and more pacific candidate for the Presidency, but it was hardly taken seriously by these men.

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What really had happened was that Wilson's divergent course had driven the majority of his party in Congress into virtually an opposition group. It is interesting to speculate as to what might have happened if Bryan had not gone over to Wilson at Baltimore and if Clark had been made president in 1912; also if Hughes had been elected in 1916. In the latter case the Democrats in Congress would probably have been almost solidly opposed to measures leading toward war, as would a considerable group of anti-war Republicans. Even during the interregnum they might well have refused to take orders from a lame-duck President.\*

The climax came first in the Senate. On March 3, when the Gore resolution had been set for action, Senators Stone and Gore, with the aid of Vice President Marshall, shrewdly maneuvered to prevent any vote being taken upon the original proposition and succeeded in getting a resolution of virtually opposite import tabled instead. Senator Gore, rising to a question of personal privilege, asked the right to amend his own resolution. Senator Ollie James, a strong organization Democrat, moved that the resolution and all amendments to it and substitutes for it be tabled. When Senator Stone

\* Perhaps Wilson would have taken Col. House's advice; appointed Hughes Secretary of State, resigned the Presidency, brought about the resignation of the Vice-President, and thus made Hughes President at once.



insisted upon his privilege to amend, Senator James made the point that a motion to table was not debatable. The Vice President ruled that both were right. Senator Gore might amend his resolution but not debate it. His amendment in reality effected an utterly variant substitute. Retaining only the original preamble it struck out the entire resolution and substituted the following: "That the sinking by a German submarine, without notice or warning, of an armed merchant vessel of her public enemy, resulting in the death of a citizen of the United States, would constitute a just and sufficient cause of war between the United States and the German Empire." And this was the resolution that the Senate tabled.<sup>83</sup>

To make it perfectly clear that the "amended" resolution entirely supplanted the original one, and hence to remove the latter from consideration, even as a proffered substitute, Senator Stone interjected above the uproar of heated protest and defense: "I desire to understand — and I think the Senate should understand — whether the resolution has been so amended as just read, and if that is the question now before the Senate." The Vice President ruled: "That is the question to which the motion to lay on the table goes."<sup>84</sup>

The tabling of this resolution may well have been regarded as a challenge to the President's position on armed merchantmen. At least it was a refusal to en-



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dorse his position. The most that Presidential forces could rightfully claim was that the Senate had failed for the time to adopt a positively obstructive course.

Some of the more pacific newspapers recognized this fact and so interpreted the matter to their readers. The militant ones, however, which greatly preponderated, hailed the outcome as a decisive victory for the Administration. They gave the impression, especially in their headlines, that *the* Gore resolution — the original one — had been overwhelmingly defeated. The substitute resolution was obfuscated in some cases and in others reserved for “continued on page x-teen.” At any rate the impression was left that the President’s position had been gloriously upheld. And this misled not only the great mass of the reading public at the time but nearly all historians who have since recorded the matter. Of the various works on recent American history which refer to the Senate’s action on the question and of the more specialized treatments of the war era, the writer has found only one that states accurately what happened — Hartley Grattan’s *Why We Fought*.<sup>85</sup>

In the House the struggle was more long drawn out. The pacific element among the rank and file was doggedly persistent; and so were some of the leaders, but others capitulated. Flood and Pou,\* heading the

\* Pou was only acting head of the Committee on Rules in the absence of its chairman.

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Committees on Foreign Affairs and on Rules respectively — from which committees alone a warning resolution could come to the floor — had been persuaded that the President must be upheld. Again a trick was resorted to, but one of a different character. Among the various resolutions which had been introduced, there was one which was known to be widely objectionable even among those who favored a warning. In fact, according to Kitchin, nearly all of these, himself included, greatly disliked it.<sup>86</sup> Introduced by Representative McLemore, a Democrat from Texas, an Irish-American who seems to have been strongly pro-German, it appeared too much like a lawyer's brief in defense of the German position; and it slapped the President in the face with an unnecessary sharpness that was in bad taste. It was the preamble mainly that Kitchin and his group thought intolerable, but the last paragraph of the resolution proper also sounded rather cocky.

As the reader will doubtless wish to judge for himself as to the grounds for this opposition to it in the ranks of the advocates of warning, the preamble is here reproduced in full with a summary of the resolution.<sup>87</sup>

"Whereas, the Governments of two of the Powers at present in war in Europe and on the high seas have informed all neutral Powers of their intention to instruct the commanders of their submarine naval ves-

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sels to attack upon sight after February 29 all armed vessels of their enemies whether such armed vessels are admittedly naval vessels or carry their armament under the name and guise of ‘defensive armament for merchant ships’; and

“Whereas, the Government of Germany, one of the Powers which have so informed the neutral Powers, has submitted to the Government of the United States photographic facsimiles of alleged secret orders of the British Government, which secret orders direct that such so-called ‘defensive armaments for merchant ships’ shall be used offensively and shall be manned and directed by naval officers and men of the navy of Great Britain, and such so-called ‘defensive armament for merchants ships’ and such naval officers and men shall be, so far as possible, concealed and disguised when in neutral waters and ports, with the evident intention to deceive; and

“Whereas, the only possible use for a ‘defensive gun’ is the same as the use of an ‘offensive gun,’ namely, to shoot and if possible destroy or damage the enemy ship, whether submarine or other naval craft; and

“Whereas, the Government of the United States has neither the desire nor the right to dictate to any of the Powers whether they shall arm their merchant ships with guns or other armament or not and has no interest in the success or failure of such ships so armed in using their armaments in the only way in

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which they could be effectively used, namely, in destroying or injuring enemy submarines or other naval vessels; and

“Whereas, the Government of the United States has no interest in the success or failure of the submarines or other naval vessels of any Power in escaping or destroying such merchant ships so armed and has no desire or right to dictate to any of the Powers what steps they shall take to protect their vital interests and pursue their legitimate belligerent operations; and

“Whereas, the Government of the United States cannot look upon any naval engagement between any armed ships of opposing belligerent Powers, no matter how such ships, or any one of such ships, may be designated or disguised, as other than a naval engagement undertaken by each belligerent with the purpose of destroying the other belligerent ships and the lives of the people thereon; and

“Whereas, while it is indifferent as to quibbles about such terms as ‘offensive’ and ‘defensive’ as applied to guns on ships of Powers at war, the Government of the United States is vitally concerned to offer its own citizens, the best possible advice, counsel, and assistance in avoiding the hazards of war; and

“Whereas, the Governments of Germany and Austria-Hungary have given the Government of the United States positive assurance that armed ships carrying



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chiefly non-belligerent passengers can be moved to a place of safety; and

“Whereas, the Government of the United States is vitally interested in preserving to its own warships, submarines and other vessels full necessary freedom of action against an enemy, whether avowed or disguised, in any possible future war; therefore — ”

Then followed the resolution requesting the President to warn all American citizens to refrain from traveling on the armed ships of belligerent Powers, and finally, requesting that the Administration submit to the House the German memorandum containing the photographic facsimiles referred to in the preamble and other relevant documents “for its assistance in performing its constitutional duty of advising the President of the United States with regard to foreign relations.”

One of the chief objections to this resolution in the minds of those who favored a warning, and of others, was the fact that it assumed the authenticity of these alleged facsimiles and other documents, despite the fact that its author and his colleagues had never seen them and had no certain proof of their existence.

Kitchin sought in vain, he said, to get a simple, straightforward resolution of warning presented; but the above was the only one that the Committee on Rules would report, and the Committee on Foreign Affairs would not report any at all.<sup>88</sup> McLemore, himself, when

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he learned of the objections to his preamble and to a portion of his resolution, "appeared before the Rules Committee and asked it to strike out all except the warning feature," but without avail.<sup>89</sup> Kitchin and Clark went to the President and argued that a resolution of this character *must* come from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, but Wilson held that it might equally well come from the Committee on Rules.<sup>90</sup>

Foreseeing defeat if the McLemore resolution alone were presented, the dissenters sought a compromise whereby only a sort of blanket vote of confidence in the Administration should be taken. But Wilson notified Flood that he wanted no "soft soap"; the issue must be "squarely met!"<sup>91</sup> Did he not know that his supporters were seeing to it that the issue *must not* be squarely met?

On March 7, when the McLemore resolution came up for final action, Kitchin turned the floor leadership over to Pou, in accordance with his earlier statement that his opposition to Administration policies would be as a member and not as majority leader. Though the five-hour debate was spirited, there was a prevalent feeling that the outcome was predetermined. Hence it was no matter of surprise that the resolution was tabled — by a vote of 276 to 142.\* If there was anything sur-

\* Three votes were taken: first, on the previous question to dispose of the resolution (256-160); then on accepting the time allotments and other matters of procedure prescribed by the Committee on Rules (271-137); and finally on the McLemore resolution itself (276-142).



PULLING THE STRINGS

CARTOON BY ROLLIN KIRBY IN *New York World*.



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prising it was in the strength of the minority vote, all things considered. Thirty-three Democrats, who swallowed all objections to the form of the resolution and defied Administration pressure; 102 Republicans, some of them strongly anti-war and others simply anti-Administration; five Progressives; one Independent; and one Socialist composed the minority.<sup>92</sup>

Again the militant press jubilantly hailed the outcome as a decisive victory for the President's course. "PRO-GERMANS ARE SWEEPED TO DEFEAT AS THE HOUSE VOTES TO SUSTAIN AMERICAN RIGHTS," proclaimed the New York *Herald*. "To Democratic Senators and Democratic Representatives alone," it declared, "belongs all the discredit for having dragged the armed merchantmen issue into Congress. To Democratic Senators and Democratic Representatives alone belongs all the honor of being picked as tools by Bernstorff and the lesser instruments of Kaiserism working to destroy the President's power and usefulness in international affairs."<sup>93</sup> In view of the interests which the *Herald* represented, it is interesting to speculate as to what inspired the word *usefulness*.

On the other hand, the few papers that were still pacific were aware that the issue had not been squarely met, and so informed their readers. According to the New York *Evening Post*, for example, the movement for a warning resolution was beaten by "parliamentary gymnastics." What it all amounted to, as that paper



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saw it, was that Congress was hesitant to embarrass the Administration in the midst of diplomatic negotiations, but was quite unwilling to put the country into war to protect American traffic on the armed vessels of belligerent Powers. The Greensboro *Daily News* was of similar opinion, and its Washington correspondent quoted several Congressmen, including Kitchin, to the effect that the move had been defeated by a ruse.<sup>94</sup>

Historians thus far have been quite unmindful of the trick of making action on the objectionable McLemore resolution the only opportunity for members of the House to vote against the President's policy, and hence of the fact that the question was never fairly presented in that body. Kitchin remained of the opinion that the Wilson forces had not dared to present the issue squarely. He wrote to several of his correspondents as follows. "The Rules committee (and between us confidentially, the Administration) was afraid to give us a straight vote on a simple resolution warning Americans to stay off the armed vessels of belligerents. . . . *The big Eastern press and papers generally backed by the Morgan interests and munitions plants which have contracts with the Allies are trying to shape public sentiment in favor of our government finding some pretext to go to war with Germany and help the Allies.*" \*<sup>95</sup>

There was doubtless an element of rationalization

\* Italics mine.

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from political expediency among those Democrats who favored a warning resolution but voted to table this particular one. Its objectionable features, real though they were, may have loomed larger in their minds because of the possible consequences of its passage. Even Kitchin, strongly as he favored the principle and dauntless as he was, finally voted to table.

The intense excitement of late February and early March, 1916, over this question was suddenly diverted, when, two days after the vote on the McLemore resolution, Villa, the Mexican bandit, made his brutal raid on Columbus, New Mexico. This struck the Administration at a particularly vulnerable spot. Hearst and others with vested interests in the republic to the South of us, yellow journalists and pseudo-patriots in general, along with militant Republicans, had lambasted the President from the start for his pacific attitude toward revolutionary Mexico. Here was a horrible example of the results! If Hearst and his ilk were seeking deliberately to divert attention from the European crisis, because of greater interests in Mexico and because of anti-British feeling, the results were temporarily effective. The quarrel with Germany was all but forgotten for several weeks. Although the country was threatened with war with Great Powers, the Administration yielded momentarily to pressure groups and sent our army on a comic opera expedition to "get Villa." Be it

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said, however, that Wilson evidently was anxious to have the Mexican trouble settled amicably, and that he took no stock of Hearst's demand that we annex everything south of us to the Panama Canal, and beyond.

The Mexican affair was soon eclipsed again by the submarine controversy. On March 24, 1916, the *Sussex*, a French steamer, was torpedoed without warning in the English Channel, with several American casualties. This was serious. Would the President regard it as properly a *casus belli*? Perhaps he did; perhaps he was uncertain. The evidence seems to indicate that he determined, then and there, upon immediate belligerency but was restrained by leaders of his party in Congress.

And thereby hangs one of the most controversial questions that have come down to us from that era, and one upon which the Kitchin papers throw significant light — that of the “Sunrise Conference.” Whispered first in Washington and later spread more widely, the story has long gone the rounds that at this juncture Wilson decided that the time had come to cease arguing with Germany; that the United States should enter the war on the side of the Allies and force a “righteous settlement”; and that to this end he summoned a group of Congressional leaders into conference. To avoid the newspaper men and other publicity hounds, he was said to have arranged the meeting at an early-morning hour; hence the traditional designation, “Sunrise Confer-

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ence." Present with Wilson, it was said, were Kitchin, Clark, and Flood. When the President announced his bellicose stand his conferees — shocked and indignant — were quoted as telling him flatly that "if any effort were made to bring about a war upon Germany they would fight it openly and vigorously on the floor," and that, with large majorities in the country and in Congress on their side, they would block any war resolution.

The first published account of this conference to attract wide attention among students of the period appeared in an article by Gilson Gardner in *McNaught's Monthly* in June, 1925, under the title "Why We Delayed Entering the War." It was based mainly upon hearsay evidence, with the apparent confirmation of Kitchin and Mrs. Champ Clark. Gardner had written Kitchin in December, 1921, relating the story as he had heard it and inquiring whether it were true. Kitchin had replied:

"I will return to Washington, I hope, some time in January and will then go over with you the whole matter to which your letter refers. You know both Clark and Flood are dead, the only ones present with me. It is unfortunate that we three did not get together and write out our recollections of the conference, as the last time I saw Clark and Flood together we promised to do, and each take a copy signed by the three. I am sure, however, that there are some members of Congress who will remember our talking the matter over with them



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the day the conference took place; and also the conference the afternoon before between the President, Senator Kern, Democratic leader in the Senate, and Flood, chairman of Foreign Affairs in the House, to which I was invited to go by Kern, Stone and Flood, but was then busily engaged in another important matter before the House and so was excused under existing circumstances. I do not think it wise to talk now.

“The conference the day before was the cause of Clark, Flood and I making an engagement with the President the following morning at 7:30 or 8:00, very early to prevent newspaper men and others seeing us or knowing of the conference. Clark, Flood and I often afterwards talked about it and our recollections are the same.”

Gardner also produced a letter from Mrs. Clark, who was quite sure she had heard her husband talk of the conference numbers of times. But she confused the issue by bringing in the controversy over the McLemore resolution. Perhaps her confirmation of the “Sunrise Conference” had resulted from a mental confusion produced by the power of suggestion imposed over actual memories of an earlier and less significant meeting. Perhaps she tangled two episodes, distinct but equally true. It was quite possible, however, that she merely referred to the stormy sessions over the warning resolutions as part of the background of the graver crisis in April.

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Kitchin left similar doubts. His letter, when closely examined, said less than appeared on the surface. It did not say when the conference occurred, what was discussed, or what anyone's attitude was. His statements might equally well have fitted one of the heated interviews of February, 1916, over the warning resolutions. On the other hand, as Gardner had written him the traditional story, Kitchin's reply might appear as confirmatory by implication.

But historians were unconvinced. Students of the period considered it an interesting, unsolved question. Text-book writers ignored it. Of those who wrote specialized accounts of the era, Harry Elmer Barnes credited the story; Hartley Grattan inclined to the view that Kitchin and Mrs. Clark had in mind one of the conferences over the Gore-McLemore resolutions, and accepted Professor Beard's conclusion at the time, that "the story . . . is at present very shadowy, and until it is made more precise and authentic it must remain in the form of dubious evidence." Walter Millis did not connect the story with the April crisis at all but assumed that it belonged to the February controversy. Dr. Seymour ignored the question. William Allen White confused the traditional account with the *Lusitania* affair, a year earlier. George Sylvester Viereck accepted the story in general but gave it the armed-ship setting of February, 1916. Others gave little or no heed to the matter.<sup>98</sup>

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Whether the conference occurred in February or in April is a rather significant question. It should be borne in mind that on the former occasion Wilson seems not to have demanded immediate belligerency but only the pursuance of his policies to preserve our “national honor,” even though such a course might eventuate in war; whereas in the graver crisis in April he is known to have authorized Secretary Lansing to prepare a note to Germany severing diplomatic relations — an almost certain prelude to war. He held this note in abeyance for a week or so, then suddenly scrapped it and wrote another which left the door open for continued “neutrality.”

Why did he change his mind? Was it largely because of the stubborn opposition in Congress as reflected in the “Sunrise Conference”?

The question may be raised as to how Wilson, after the opposition which he encountered from Congressional leaders in February, could have hoped to induce them to take a more belligerent course in April. It should be remembered that on the former occasion he had triumphed — with the ultimate, though reluctant, aid of some of the leaders in both Houses who had opposed his course. Then too, the situation in April was more grave, and judging from the militant press, the country was more warlike than ever before.

Whatever inspired Wilson to call the meeting the afternoon before, which led to the fateful breakfast-

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time session, the fact is that among the Kitchin papers there is definite confirmation of the essential points in the story of the "Sunrise Conference" as traditionally told.

In March, 1921 — almost nine months before Gardner wrote — C. H. Claudy, of Washington, D.C., had written to Kitchin as follows: <sup>97</sup>

"I have been told that in 1916 President Wilson called a conference between the Hon. Champ Clark, the Hon. Mr. Flood, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and yourself, that this conference took place early in the morning to avoid the presence of the newspaper men and that at this conference President Wilson expressed his desire to declare war against Germany but was persuaded not to do so by you three gentlemen, who told him that if he attempted such a thing, you would fight him on the floor of the House.

"If this is a true story (and my informant said that his information came from you) it is, of course, something the country would be very much interested in hearing. If it is not a true story it ought not to be spread.

"I, therefore, am writing you and asking you if in the first place it is true, and, in the second place, if it is a fact would you be willing to give me an authorized interview to that effect or to sign a statement to that effect, looking to publication?"

Kitchin replied: <sup>98</sup>



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“I have just been handed your letter at my residence \* by my clerk. I would rather see you in my office and talk with you about the matter as soon as I am well enough to go down to the Capitol regularly, than to write you about it at this time.

“Champ Clark, Flood, and myself *did have*, early one morning, between seven and eight o'clock, *such a conference with the President. At that time he seemed anxious to go to war with Germany immediately. This was in April, 1916.*† Champ Clark, Flood and myself have talked about the matter dozens of times and our recollection as to just what was said exactly coincides.

“As said above, sometime after I get well enough to be at the Capitol regularly, you can come up and I will have Flood to come in my office and we will talk with you about it, and you can have our recollections in the matter, but this is not written for publication at this time. When I recover my health and strength I will give you the whole story, perhaps for publication.”

Kitchin had suffered a stroke in April, 1920, from which he never entirely recovered. But his mind and his excellent memory remained as clear as ever, as shown by his correspondence, his committee reports, and the testimony of those who knew him.

So far as is known he never elaborated further upon the conference except in private conversation. But he

\* This refers to his residence in Washington, acquired in 1918.

† Italics mine.

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often talked of it in confidence with members of his family, his colleagues and other friends. The surviving members of his family all remember the incident and in general are inclined to place it in the spring rather than the winter.”

Judge E. Yates Webb, then a colleague of Kitchin’s, writes as follows:

“With reference to the ‘Sunrise Conference,’ I don’t remember having heard Mr. Kitchin make any statement about it, but I do remember (and I think it was about this same conference) Hal Flood’s coming to me on the floor of the House, rather much agitated, and saying that it looked like we were going to get in the war, judging from the President’s attitude. I remember Mr. Flood’s saying that he and others in the conference asked the President what we, the United States, would do in case we did get in the war, and he said the President replied: ‘Well, we will lend the Allies some money and send a few ships over there and wind up the war.’ Mr. Flood asked me to say nothing about this statement to the public, and I never have told it to any one before unless it was in strict confidence. I know the newspaper reporters tried to get me to make some statement about what I had heard about the conference, but I always evaded, or declined to say. . . .

“Champ Clark told me some time before war was declared, possibly six months or a year, that he had told the President that at that time ninety per cent of the

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Members of Congress were opposed to entering the war. Whether Mr. Clark made this statement at the ‘Sunrise Conference’ referred to, I cannot say. I do remember that Mr. Flood’s statement, which he made to other members, no doubt in confidence, created quite a thrill or shock among the Members of the House; because at that time I think the body of the Congress had no notion that we would ever get in the war.”<sup>100</sup>

Ex-Congressman Charles H. Sloan, who was an anti-war Republican and a friend of Kitchin, for whom he had “great admiration and a real affection,” also confirms the story. “My first knowledge of the meeting,” he writes, “came from a Democratic representative from Nebraska, who had received the information direct from one of the three men named. . . . I do not see that you will have much difficulty in establishing the fact of that meeting and of the attitude of the President.” It was to enlist the support of the anti-war Republicans “in quelling the war spirit evinced by the President” that Mr. Sloan was approached in the matter.<sup>101</sup>

Senator Bennett Champ Clark, son of Speaker Clark, was Parliamentarian of the House at that time and closely associated with his father; he says that there were several of those early morning conferences, from each of which “the conferees came back more and more convinced of the very grave danger of our going into the war and that President Wilson had more or less

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resolved to take that course. My own judgment in the matter is that that specific meeting, which has since been doubtful, was a 'sunrise meeting' which was in regard to the Sussex incident in April, 1916." <sup>102</sup>

From Mr. Allan L. Benson comes the following:

"Your story about Wilson, Kitchin, Flood and Clark needs no confirmation, yet it may interest you to receive this small contribution from me.

"Mr. Kitchin told me of this incident the day that it took place. I knew him quite well and, as a magazine writer, was accustomed to call upon him every time I visited Washington, which was usually every month or so. On this occasion something seemed deeply to have stirred him. He seemed indignant, outraged and almost excited. It was still forenoon and he had come from the White House only a little while before. He said that Speaker Clark and Chairman Flood . . . were also there . . . He said that Wilson pounded the table with his fist and said that if this country were to declare war at once hostilities would be ended by August." <sup>103</sup>

During the Presidential campaign that followed, while the country was ringing with the slogan, "He kept us out of war," Kitchin and his circle were saying among themselves, "We kept *him* out of war." <sup>104</sup>



#### CHAPTER IV

### “STAY OUT: IT’S NOT OUR FIGHT”

WHEN Germany acceded to Wilson’s demands on the submarine issue in May, 1916, there seemed no other course for him in the ensuing Presidential campaign but to play upon the country’s preponderant desire for peace. Had he involved us in war in April, the plea would naturally have been, “Never change horses while crossing a stream”; and the outburst of patriotic fervor inevitably evoked by war would have given great force to this appeal. Restrained from this course, however, he could bank upon his diplomatic triumphs whereby he had maintained “peace with honor.” Had he not by his masterful logic compelled the Imperial German Government to respect American rights without the firing of a shot or the shedding of blood? This was a powerful argument in the South and West, the sections which offered his only hope of reëlection.

But such an appeal to pacific sentiment was not in accord with his wishes, and he is said to have been reluctant to give it his blessing. For one thing, its false implications were at odds with his Puritan conscience. More important, perhaps, it led in the wrong direction.

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This is not to assume that Wilson was hell-bent for war. It is rather to assume, as the evidence strongly indicates, that he wished to prepare public sentiment for a declaration of war, if and when it appeared to him to be desirable. It may be true, though it seems very doubtful, that he foresaw American participation from the start and moved steadily toward that end. His secretary quotes him as saying on the eve of our war declaration: "Tumulty, from the very beginning I saw the end of this horrible thing; but I could not move faster than the great majority of our people would permit." Then he took from his pocket, says Tumulty, an old clipping from the *Manchester Guardian*, saying that it had correctly interpreted his course. It predicted that he would "lead his people by easy stages to the side of the Allies" and in time convince them "that no other course save war" was "possible."<sup>1</sup> Such a statement may well have been made in the heat of the moment. All things considered, however, it seems more reasonable to believe that Wilson sought an Allied victory by means of our "differential neutrality"; that in general he hoped and prayed for a German defeat without our declared hostility; but that he was ready upon occasions to meet German defiance or to save the Allies from threatened defeat by means of American belligerency. In any case the encouragement of pacifist sentiment in the country by the slogan, "He kept us out of war," was not in keeping with his objectives. But it was prob-

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ably his only hope of reelection. And reelection was supremely desired, not only for its own sake, but to keep open the avenue which might lead to his becoming the great World Arbiter or else the Commander of Righteousness Triumphant.

In the summer and fall of 1916 the country was lulled into a sense of false security. It came to be widely assumed that Germany had agreed to confine her submarine warfare within the limits prescribed by the President for the duration of the war. Actually she had added a significant proviso:

“But neutrals cannot expect,” said the note of May 4, “that Germany, forced to fight for existence, shall, for the sake of neutral interests, restrict the use of an effective weapon, if the enemy is permitted to continue to apply at will methods of warfare violative of international law. Such a demand would be incompatible with the character of neutrality, and the German Government is convinced the Government of the United States does not think of making such a demand. . . .” It expected that Wilson’s previous notes to Britain would be seriously followed up; that “the Government of the United States will now demand and insist that the British Government shall forthwith observe the rules of international law. . . .

“Should steps taken by the Government of the United States,” the note continued, “not obtain the object of its



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desires, to have the laws of humanity followed by all belligerent nations, the German Government would then be facing a new situation in which it must reserve to itself complete liberty of decision."

This proviso was fully noted at the time by the press. In fact, it was held by many — apparently the majority — of the metropolitan dailies to render the note unacceptable. A number, however, even including some of the more militant ones, conceded that it warranted our placing Germany on probation. Only the few pacific organs, together with the pro-German and anti-British ones, stressed the obligation morally thrown upon our Government to press seriously for a mitigation of the high-handed policies of the Allies.

In his reply to the German note Wilson stated: "The Government of the United States notifies the Imperial German Government that it cannot for a moment entertain, much less discuss, a suggestion that respect by German naval authorities for the rights of citizens of the United States upon the high seas should in any way or in the slightest degree be made contingent upon the conduct of any other Government affecting the rights of neutrals and non-combatants. Responsibility in such matters is single, not joint; absolute, not relative."

Germany neither accepted nor rejected this arbitrary dictum but left her future course contingent upon developments. Months passed, and the Wilson Admin-



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istration made no persistent effort to press its earlier demands upon Britain and her allies. It was evident that the war in Europe was a stalemate, and that the United States was a possible balance of power. Meanwhile, thanks to the Morgan loans, our financial stake in the success of the Allies was mounting into the billions. If Germany, in desperation, should yield to her militant navalists and renew the submarine warfare, she would jeopardize these billions, threaten our mounting “prosperity,” and afford Wilson the justification that to preserve our “national honor” there was “no other course save war.”

Though it should have been obvious that this situation was likely to arise, Americans were more or less blinded to the fact in the course of the Presidential campaign. The Democrats obscured it by their boast that Wilson had kept us out of the war and, by implication at least, that he would continue to keep us out. The Republicans, seeking both the pro-German and the militant pro-Ally vote, could not afford in general to be frank in the matter. Their candidate, Mr. Hughes, was quite colorless. Except in regions strongly pro-German or anti-war, their politicians were more likely to lambast Wilson because he was “too proud to fight,” or because, as Elihu Root put it, “he first shook his fist and then his finger.” Hence in the main neither party warned the public of the all but inevitable outcome of Wilson’s policies.

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Meanwhile Britain, far from mitigating her blockade-policies, increased their severity; and though Wilson was vexed at times at her high-handedness, he made only spasmodic — and quite ineffective — efforts to stop her violation of American rights in her endeavor to starve the German population. To those who recalled it, this accentuated the following passage in Germany's note of May 4:

“As matters stand, the German Government cannot but reiterate regret that the sentiments of humanity, which the Government of the United States extends with such fervor to the unhappy victims of submarine warfare, are not extended with the same warmth of feeling to the many millions of women and children who, according to the avowed intention of the British Government, shall be starved. . . . The German Government, in agreement with the German people, fails to understand this discrimination.”

Somewhat earlier a resolution had been introduced in the House by Representative Emerson, requesting the Department of State to seek an arrangement with the Allies whereby food products, particularly milk, might be imported from neutral countries into Germany and Austria for the use of the civilian population. The abortive efforts of the Administration in late January and early February, 1916, to inaugurate a compromise plan among belligerents with reference to blockades, had included a provision that food be ad-

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mitted to the Central Powers and sold to the civilian population under American supervision. But when Britain damned the whole plan the Administration ceased its efforts in that direction. Emerson continued to maintain, however, that “our humane President” would urge this particular point “if assured of the backing of Congress.” He also hoped that the Allies would consent if they were “made properly acquainted with the situation.”<sup>2</sup>

But they apparently were not “made properly acquainted” with it. Lord Cecil referred to the Emerson move as “dishonest, insincere, and pro-German.” Emerson took exception to this on the floor of the House, retorting that the move was “pro-American and pro-humanitarian.” He adduced evidence from Judge Ben Lindsey and others that many thousands of German and Austrian infants were dying or becoming seriously diseased from the lack of essential food elements.<sup>3</sup> But his resolution never came to the floor.

When appeals came to Kitchin with reference to the matter, he was quite sympathetic toward the desired objective but felt that Congress was powerless to act; he remembered the fate of the Gore-McLemore resolutions. He wrote to Lansing inclosing a copy of the Emerson resolution and saying that it had been referred to the Committee on Ways and Means. The committee, he said, “will take no action in the matter, but will leave it to your good judgment. Trusting,” he concluded,



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"that you will give the same your consideration. . . ." <sup>4</sup>  
The consideration was not favorable.

In the midst of all these worries came the *Herald*-sponsored contest for Kitchen's seat, referred to in Chapter II. On April 22, 1916, C. W. Mitchell of Aulander, N.C., announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomination in opposition to Claude Kitchen. He was a combination of merchant, banker, and local politician, having served in the state Senate.<sup>5</sup> His campaign funds were said to have come from business men in the larger towns of his district, who were opposed to Kitchen because of disagreements over Federal patronage and because of his opposition to Administration policies. On this point the Greensboro *Daily News* averred that they fought him because he did not favor "the Roosevelt, or steel trust, kind of preparedness, the kind so dear to the hearts of the Morgans, the Fricks and the Garys," and other "shell-mongers."<sup>6</sup> Another paper declared that "the man who can beat him isn't living."<sup>7</sup> But the New York *Herald*, the *Times*, and other militant dailies freely predicted his defeat.<sup>8</sup> In some unaccountable way the amusement-places in his district which had been clamoring in vain for the militant propaganda film, "Battle Cry of Peace," were now enabled to get it with ease.<sup>9</sup> His district was flooded with misinformation and misinterpretation. Kitchen remained at his post, unperturbed. When the



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votes were counted he was the victor almost five to one.<sup>10</sup>

Shortly afterward, Oswald Garrison Villard wrote Kitchin that he had almost been mobbed for a pacific speech which he made at Fortress Monroe, but that he regained his audience by a tribute to Kitchin which was “well received.”

“As for Kitchin,” he had said, “he has given an example of courage and outspokenness of which the South and the Nation may well feel proud. He refused to swallow his convictions at party behest, he refused to be untrue to our highest ideals, refused to yield to the blandishments and exaltations of the compromising politicians at the White House. He was deaf to threats that he would lose his House leadership; deaf to the efforts to defeat him in his own district, which has triumphantly sustained him, as did his party associates. His prestige has waxed as Wilson’s has steadily waned.”<sup>11</sup>

To maintain his course, Kitchin had to sacrifice what to many politicians would have been fatal — his power over patronage. By the summer of 1916 he was frankly advising job-seekers to apply to their Senators. It came to be said that to be counted among the “Kitchin forces” was a liability rather than an asset.<sup>12</sup>

Kitchin continued, nevertheless, so far as his position admitted, to strive for an honest neutrality. But

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what could he really accomplish? What, indeed, could Congress accomplish? This situation well illustrates a highly undemocratic feature of our Constitutional system, whereby, except in the matter of ratifying treaties, the President is virtually absolute in his power to dictate foreign policies. He can decide between peace and war! The fact that Congress alone can finally declare war is all but meaningless, for the President can bring about a situation in which Congress is left only the beggar's choice of pursuing his policies to the bitter end or stultifying the country in the eyes of the world. It may look on with preponderant disapproval while the President is shaping the fatal course, as may "the folks back home"; but it may not effectually intervene.

Kitchin received numerous letters in the spring of 1916, and again in the early months of 1917, beseeching him to do this or that to preserve our neutrality; but he could only reply, sympathetically but with obvious misgivings, that he was powerless to act.

In July, 1916, Great Britain announced the most high-handed of all her blockade-policies — that of the Black List. Neutral firms alleged to be German-owned, or friendly to Germany, or to have been "trading with the enemy" or with other neutral firms having "enemy" connections were subjected to a ruinous boycott. Even Wilson was momentarily incensed by this extreme course. He called Ambassador Page home from London for consultation — and to put a little "American

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atmosphere” into his system — and threatened for a time to be as stern with Britain as he had been with Germany. He asked and received from Congress authorization to employ retaliatory measures, including an embargo. He sent a rather vigorous protest to Britain, but before the reply came his wrath had cooled. Doubtless Colonel House and the Allied Ambassadors were partly responsible for his mollification, but their role was probably secondary. Wilson, himself, could not get away from his pro-British bias, his belief that the Allies were fighting our battle as well as their own and that we should do nothing to embarrass them. So the Department of State announced before the British reply was received that the embargo would not be employed.

Numbers of protests came to Kitchin relative to the Black List, mainly from his own state, and, at least in some cases, from parties not directly affected.<sup>13</sup> He wrote to Lansing for further information to enable him “to discuss the matter more intelligently” on the floor of the House. Lansing replied with a history of the subject and assurances that his department had protested.<sup>14</sup> It is scarcely surprising that when nothing came of the protest Kitchin wondered what had become of “the whole fine fabric.”

From the summer of 1916 to the early months of 1917 Kitchin’s correspondence reflects the absence of popular concern over the danger of our embroilment in

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the war. In contrast to the numerous pleas before and after, there was in this interval scarcely a reference to such apprehensions. Aside from resentment toward the British blockade, his correspondents were concerned with their immediate problems — mostly of jobs and taxes.

Among the few exceptions, Mrs. J. M. Forbes, of the Woman's Peace Party, wrote him seeking his support for a Federation of Nations to Enforce Peace.<sup>15</sup> This organization, promoted by Jane Addams, arose from a deep sincerity of purpose, but it was soon invaded by subversive elements. It attracted a wide and earnest following and did much to prepare the way for the Wilson-sponsored movement for a League of Nations; unfortunately, however, it early embraced the prevalent propaganda-inspired view that all militarism was "made in Germany." If the horrible thing could only be destroyed at its source, was the assumption, the world would be rid of it for good and all. Hence the movement was unwittingly led astray by militant anti-Germans who joined it for their own purposes. Its sponsors, says Millis, "might have guessed where it was leading them when they suddenly received the support of none other than Mr. Roosevelt — the nation's most influential militarist."<sup>16</sup> Kitchin's reply to Mrs. Forbes gave hearty endorsement to the objective but questioned the feasibility of implementing it. He feared it would prove an "hypocrisy and mockery."<sup>17</sup>



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Wilson was fully aware in the summer and fall of 1916 that if the military deadlock in Europe persisted and Britain’s blockade went unabated Germany was almost certain to renew the unrestricted use of her submarines; in which case his stand had virtually committed this country to war. The one alternative to entering the conflict, it seemed, was to end it. He had thought of himself as a possible mediator from the start and had made known to the warring Powers that the good offices of his Government would be available to them at any time.

Colonel House had slipped in and out of belligerent capitals, seeking to draw out diplomats as to the prospects of a settlement through American mediation. Strongly pro-Ally himself, and unaccustomed to the wiles of the diplomat, he had not been as tactful or as wise as he thought he was, and certainly not as successful as he had hoped to be. He had naïvely drunk deep of British and French propaganda, flattering himself the while that he was being treated to the frankest intimacies of the mighty. It was bad enough that he disclosed to the Allies in this way the Administration’s bias in their favor, thus making Wilson more impotent in dealing with their transgressions; but it was worse that he inveigled the President into backing his ill-advised schemes.<sup>18</sup>

The most notorious of these was the House-Grey agreement. In the fall of 1915 Colonel House had a

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great inspiration. Our Government might secretly reach an understanding with the Allies as to peace terms which they would be willing to accept. Whenever they thought the time opportune, Wilson, as arbiter, might submit such a proposal to both sides. The Allies, for effect, might appear reluctant at first, and then accept. If the Central Powers agreed, the war would be ended by Wilson's mediation; if they refused, as they almost certainly would, the United States would enter the war on the side of the Allies to force a "righteous" settlement. Though hesitant at first, Wilson came to embrace this scheme. Aware, however, that only Congress could actually declare war he inserted the word *probably* in the clause that promised intervention on the side of the Allies.<sup>19</sup>

Although Wilson must surely have realized the duplicity involved in the scheme, it is not certain that he was aware of the full extent to which his beloved Colonel went in such Machiavellian diplomacy. In setting forth the plan, Colonel House wrote Sir Edward Grey:

"I would not let Berlin know, of course, of any understanding had with the Allies, but would rather lead them to think our proposal would be rejected by the Allies. This might induce Berlin to accept the proposal, but, if they did not do so, it would nevertheless be the purpose to intervene. If the Central Powers were still

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obdurate, it would probably be necessary for us to join the Allies and force the issue.”<sup>20</sup>

When Grey inquired whether our Government would participate in a proposed League of Nations to maintain the *post-bellum* status and to prevent future wars, Wilson’s interest was quickened. Here was a Big Idea. How much Wilson had thought of such a plan before is not known; how much he thought of it afterward is well known to all mankind. Was it really possible that this horrible slaughter might be turned to purposes benign? A war to end war! Destroy *German* Militarism, — therefore *all* militarism; — redraw the map of the world on lines of justice and right (*such as the Allies would agree upon*); permit no change thereafter without the consent of the Powers in common conclave; and punish by united action any Power that sought to alter the new order. Even a world war — even American participation in it — might be justified as the price of such an outcome.

So the Colonel hied away to Europe — first, of course, to London. Grey, surprisingly enough, was not enthusiastic about the scheme for forcing a settlement. A typical case of British obtuseness! thought House. But Grey was not as “dull” as the Colonel alleged. The time was not propitious for the Allies to endorse a proposal for peace. And who could say when it would be? The Central Powers held the advantage on all fronts

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and hence had the superior bargaining power. The Allies, with their enormous resources and favorable contacts, hoped to wear the Germans out, win an ultimate victory, and gain most, if not all, of the booty which their secret treaties allotted them. What was more, aware of the sympathy of the Wilson Administration, they had reason to hope that the submarine issue would eventually bring this country to their side under conditions more favorable to their purposes.

But Grey and his confederates did not actually reject the Colonel's offer. It was well for them to hold it in reserve as a possible last resort. And by all means they must not offend the President's most intimate adviser. Hence they stalled for time. They naturally felt safe in delay when assured by the Colonel that America's purpose was to do whatever seemed best to promote their victory. Our enormous economic reserves and fresh man-power might turn the tide of their ebbing fortunes into a glorious, inundating triumph. It was better to wait.

To keep the plan open, Grey endorsed a "memorandum" embodying the House scheme in February, 1916, with the Colonel's admitted qualification that it was not to be employed until the Allies thought the time opportune. This was endorsed by Wilson, but again with the word "probably" inserted in the clause which promised American participation as a belligerent.<sup>21</sup>

The "opportune" time never came.



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In Berlin, Colonel House had made known to the German Government that Wilson contemplated making a peace move. As the situation was favorably for Germany at that time, and as her power of prolonged endurance was less than that of her enemies, she was ready to welcome such a move and anxiously awaited it through the summer and fall of 1916. But the bloody months dragged on and Wilson did not act. It was not politically wise for him to invoke the hazard which such a move would entail during the Presidential campaign. Even after the election, however, November passed and December was passing with still no word from Wilson. Despairing of action from him, Germany on December 12 made a peace proposal herself. She announced to the Allies, through the American Government, that she was ready to enter peace negotiations.

This was a tactical blunder. For one thing, in order to prevent giving the impression that the move was an evidence of weakening, she referred to her military triumphs, and her presumed ability to continue them, in terms that sounded arrogant and menacing; so that her proffered olive branch was balanced too conspicuously by the mailed fist. Besides, if Wilson’s promised offer of mediation held any possibilities less crushing to the Central Powers than the terms later forced upon them, such possibilities were now wrecked. If he recommended the acceptance of the German proposal, or even

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if he at this point offered the services of his Government as mediator, he would lay himself open to the charge of pro-German interference.

He transmitted the German note without comment, then followed it in a few days with a proposal of his own. Perhaps he was afraid that the Allies would quickly spurn the German offer and wished to keep the door to a negotiated peace unclosed; perhaps he was aware of the futility of his move, anticipated the likelihood of our early participation in the war, and wished to convince the public that he had done all in his power for peace. His was not an immediate invitation to a conference; it only requested both sides to state their war aims. It assumed that fundamentally their aims were the same — peace and security for all peoples, which might be preserved by a concert of Powers. It further assumed that, even in the specific demands which each would insist upon, the two sides were not so far apart but that an agreement might be reached, once their respective aims were made clear. But neither side was ready for a show-down.

Kitchin watched this sparring with a wish-psychoLOGY. So anxious was he to have the horrible butchery ended, and to keep this country out of it, that he was over-optimistic about such diplomatic passages. He was reported to have said with reference to the German note: "The situation appears encouraging. I believe that if the belligerents meet in a peace conference an agree-

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ment will be reached. Germany has seized an opportune moment to make her advances because she is apparently flushed with the success of her Roumanian movements, though neither side has a distinct advantage over the other considering the war as a whole. . . .”<sup>22</sup> He commended Wilson’s note and cherished the hope that it might lead to a peace conference. To Bryan, who backed up Wilson’s note with a cablegram to Lloyd George, strongly stating the case for an early peace by negotiation, he wrote a hearty commendation. “The propositions contained in it,” referring to Bryan’s cablegram, “are absolutely sound and irrefutable.”<sup>23</sup>

“What a difference it would make today if Bryan were our national head!” wrote a college president from Kitchin’s state. Between Wilson’s unneutral and perilous course and the fairer and safer position of Bryan and Kitchin, this correspondent felt sure that the majority of the people favored the latter.<sup>24</sup>

Another North Carolinian reported a conversation which he had heard on a train from plain “country people”:

“No, England would not listen to any peace proposal from Germany so long as she knew Mr. Wilson would back her up in a final show-down.”

The conversation drifted back to the original breach between Bryan and Wilson on the submarine issue.

“The day the break was made, W. J. Bryan was immortalized with the common people.”

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"Had it not been for Bryan, Kitchin, etc., and the election, we would have been in it last summer."

A newspaper editor interposed: "Of course there is no neutrality about it, but we are supporting the President."

The letter to Kitchin concluded: "You are one man that I believe acts upon your own convictions and conclusions regardless of party or politics."<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile in Germany the navalists, with the backing of the militarists, persuaded their Government that renewal of the submarine warfare offered the one great hope of victory and perhaps the one alternative to disaster. The Kaiser and his ministry finally yielded, apparently convinced that the promise offered by such a course outweighed the menace of America's active hostility. Consequently, on January 31, 1917, Germany announced that, beginning the next day, her submarine commanders were no longer to be bound by the restrictions of the *Sussex* pledge. Designated areas adjacent to the coasts of Britain, France, and Italy were declared war zones into which the vessels of neutral as well as enemy Powers were warned not to go lest they be sunk without warning. An exception was made whereby American merchantmen might go to and from Falmouth, England, through a designated lane without hindrance, provided they were marked on hull and superstructure with three perpendicular stripes, a



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meter wide, of alternating white and red, and displayed from their masts large red and white checkered flags.

Three days later the Wilson Administration severed diplomatic relations with Germany. This was an almost certain prelude to war. As such, it was exultantly welcomed by the militant pro-Allies. Many clamored for an immediate declaration of war; others were willing to await the expected overt act. Wilson “refused to believe” that Germany would actually carry out her threat. Perhaps he, like Kitchin, was indulging in wish-psychology; perhaps he was “talking only for buncombe.” The Pacific elements, greatly weakened by the rising tide of militancy, clung tenaciously to the slender thread of our still-peaceful status. Peace societies valiantly sought to mobilize the anti-war forces before it was too late; but their Washington headquarters were smashed by infuriated mobs. Bryan cancelled all speaking engagements and hurried to Washington. Pacific Congressmen gathered in solemn conclaves. Letters and telegrams poured in upon them, frantically urging opposite courses.<sup>26</sup>

It is difficult to say which were more insane, the mobs who beat up “pacifists” or the editors of militant dailies. Referring to the position of the anti-war groups in general, and of Bryan in particular, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* declared, “It comes perilously close to the border-line of treason.”<sup>27</sup> The New York *World* called

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it "A FORM OF MORAL TREASON. . . . What is called a peace propaganda is of necessity a pro-German propaganda. . . . The pacifists who advocate peace are in reality advocating nonresistance for the benefit of German militarism." <sup>28</sup>

Armed neutrality was the next move of the Administration. The President called upon Congress to vote him the authority to arm all American merchantmen against submarine attacks. He was advised, and apparently believed, that he had such authority under the Constitution, irrespective of the action of Congress, but he preferred, in the circumstances, to have Congressional approval.

Armed neutrality has been described as passive belligerency — almost certain to lead shortly to active belligerency. Yet numbers of pacific liberals seem to have thought that it could be maintained without war. Amos Pinchot, for example, wired Kitchen: "In voting 'no' on increased naval appropriation bill you have refused to play the Wall Street game. May we congratulate you and those who voted with you and suggest that you consider yourselves a committee to keep Congress from declaring war, and in last emergency to demand a policy of armed neutrality as did the Congress of 1798." <sup>29</sup> Others who were pacifically inclined offered similar advice. And thus the anti-war forces were divided on the step that proved an inevitable transition to

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war, while the militarists grew daily more clamorous for blood.

In this feverish struggle between peace and war, the Christian ministry was sharply divided. It furnished some of the most blatant advocates of war and some of the most ardent champions of peace. One of the most bitterly condemnatory letters which Kitchin received with reference to his pacific stand came from a Methodist parson in Wilson, North Carolina.<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, from the town of Littleton, also in his district, he received a petition from the ministers of the Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Protestant, Christian and Presbyterian churches, stating:

“1. A war that could be averted is murder on a national scale.

“2. This war could be averted on the part of the United States.

“3. There is not sufficient justification.

“4. We are dealing with a nation which in a desperate struggle for existence has become exasperated and war mad. To arm our merchant vessels will tend to promote war. Hence opposed to any such measure.”<sup>81</sup>

Kitchin replied: “I have been hoping, but it seems that it was against hope, that we could keep out of the European war. My protests, efforts and prayers all along have been against the situation now confronting us. . . .”<sup>82</sup>

In this he spoke volumes. Step by step along the road

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to war he had fought with all the sincerity and power which a kindly Providence had granted him to prevent the country from being finally confronted with this grim alternative between "honor" and war.

That he yielded momentarily to the logic of events, as did many other liberals, would not be hard to understand if he had not been Claude Kitchin. As it was, it is the most difficult point in his entire career to explain. Perhaps he was captivated for the moment by the Pinchot liberals. Perhaps he took the President at his word when, asking Congress for the right to arm merchantmen, he pledged that he was not moving toward war. "I am not now proposing or contemplating," said Wilson to the Congress assembled, "any step that need lead to it." And he promised that, if granted this sanction, he would do all in his power to prevent actual hostilities.<sup>28</sup>

In yielding the point, Kitchin said to the House:

"I shall vote for this bill but not without hesitation and misgiving.

"The nation confronts the gravest crisis. It faces the supremest responsibility to itself and the world.

"Already the European catastrophe threatens the faith of mankind in Christianity — in civilization.

"The widening of that catastrophe by a great and powerful nation like ours would seem to challenge the right of Christianity to exist. It calls to the test the potency of civilization itself.



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“The world holds its breath at every step Congress takes, at every utterance the President makes.

“As he declared in his address to Congress, the President already has, under the necessary implications of the Constitution, all the power with which this bill would invest him. . . .

“If he wants to get this country into the European War and make the world one vast cataclysm of blood and slaughter, he can do so with or without the enactment of this bill. If he wants to keep this country out of the European War and make its blessings to shine out to mankind through the coming ages, an example of the divine award of peace, he can do so with or without the enactment of this bill.

*“Clothed with the powers given him by the Constitution, a President of the United States can, at his will, without let or hindrance from Congress, create a situation which makes war the only alternative for this nation.\**

“In reassertion of my confidence in the sincerity and earnest desire but recently reiterated by the President in this presence to avoid war, and in the hope that he may use the confidence of Congress in him, which finds its expression in the passage of this bill, to maintain peace, I give this measure my support.” (Applause.)<sup>34</sup>

The bill was passed in the House but was stopped in the Senate by means of a filibuster conducted by La

\* Italics mine.

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Follette, Norris, Cummings, Gronna, Clapp, Works, Kenyon (Progressives and Liberal Republicans), and Stone, Vardaman, O'Gorman, Kirby, and Lane (Democrats). This elicited from Wilson his most arrogant statement of the whole controversy. "A little group of wilful men, representing no opinion but their own," he declared with obvious falsity, "have rendered the Government of the United States helpless and contemptible." <sup>85</sup>

But it was not so "helpless" after all, nor perchance so "contemptible." For the Administration proceeded, under its alleged Constitutional authority, to arm merchantment without Congressional sanction.

All that remained now was to await the "overt act." American merchantmen were armed with guns to shoot submarines on sight, with naval experts to do the shooting. But the Germans were wary. They kept away from these ships. Yet they continued their fight against British shipping, incidentally with American hazards.

"WHAT IS AN OVERT ACT?" inquired the Greensboro *Daily News*. "What is a merchant ship? What is an auxiliary cruiser? What is the status of the submarine in war?" Who knew? Was Wilson's opinion — or rationalization, — *ipso facto*, international law? And did we have to go to war to vindicate it?

Although the *News* disagreed with Kitchin's position

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in voting for armed neutrality, it was sympathetic. “We think we understand how Mr. Kitchin felt about it . . . in the travail and distress of the moment.” It even seconded a motion, suggested from various quarters, to make Kitchin the next Democratic candidate for President.<sup>86</sup>

But the most notable of all the *Daily News* editorials in this frenzied Tragedy of Errors was one in which it undertook to speak “FOR THE GREAT SILENT MASSES.”

“. . . We propose saying a word for the great silent masses of mankind, who have little opportunity of speaking for themselves, just as long as a press censorship, express or implied, renders this course happily possible.

“The *Daily News* is persuaded that the masses of people of this section have little desire to take a hand in Europe’s slaughter and confusion. Mainly from expressions received by this paper from its readers is this impression gained. We suspect too that millions of people in all parts of the country share this feeling, a great reluctance to enter the war and misgivings concerning the validity and correctness of the causes that are being assigned to our projected participation. . . . Millions of people understand clearly and other millions” feel vaguely “that the world is not to be treated to a demonstration that our commerce cannot be barred from the seas. For a long time there have been barred naval zones, well mined and closely guarded, and Amer-

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ican vessels have never ventured into these proscribed waters. . . .

“The prayers of millions of common people are not likely to avail much against the prayers of the big rich preachers, whose petitions for more bloodshed are given the widest possible publicity by a war-mad press. Allied with these war advocates of the pulpit, weak numerically but strong in the circles bent upon war, are many of the captains of our great corporations, who are wont in times of trouble to exploit foreign governments as well as their own countrymen with a deadly impartiality. The big predatory interests . . . can always count upon plenty of support from both pulpit and press. . . .

“For the rich — idle save when employed in the pastime of exploiting their countrymen — the war will mean a prolongation of the harvest. . . .” But what of the masses who must silently endure the tragic consequences!<sup>37</sup>

The New York *Sun* inadvertently corroborated this view on the eve of the war declaration: “Leading bankers expect that the entrance of the United States into the war will result in a material increase in orders placed here for shells and other munitions. One banker pointed out that the Allies have reduced their purchases of shells and finished munitions in the United States owing to the desire to curtail the heavy expenditures. Munitions companies which have been closing their



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plants and discharging employees by the thousands are expected to resume operations on a larger scale.” *The Wall Street Journal* offered further confirmation. The first sign of a big *Government loan*, it said, would give new life to all the war-orders companies.<sup>88</sup>

How utterly crass! Crass in its inception; crass in its appeal. Now that we were going to join in the slaughter — glory be! — all our profiteers, and especially the most notorious ones, would be enabled increasingly to rake in the blood money. And, besides, more workers would have jobs. The springs of Allied credit were drying up and threatening our “prosperity”; but with good old Uncle Sam to smite the rock they would flow more freely than ever. If any blue-nosed economist dared predict that the generous Uncle would be left with the bag to hold, lock him up!

Civil liberties are of scant avail when a country is crazed by the spirit of war. The militant groups who exert the powers of repression need not be a majority provided they have the superior resources behind them. They can cow enough of “the great silent masses” to make their position secure. And thus it was in those “jittery” days when we were hovering on the brink of war. It was almost as hazardous to be calmly unbiased and pacific as to be ardently pro-German. Any stranger who loitered for whatever purpose in the vicinity of a munitions plant or a Government fortifica-

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tion was likely to occasion scare headlines suggesting the presence of a German spy. Practically all the suspects proved harmless, but the "jitters" continued.

In this atmosphere Senator Overman, of North Carolina, introduced an espionage bill, expressing the current hysteria and accordingly providing for the suppression of free speech and assemblage. Representative Slayden, of Texas, wrote to Kitchen protesting against this and against other reactionary policies of the junior Senator from North Carolina. "A fire should be built under him," wrote Slayden.<sup>39</sup> Kitchen heartily agreed. The Overman bill, he said, would make every member of the Woman's Peace Party liable to arrest.<sup>40</sup> But he was also aware of the power of a political machine of which Overman was a part and of the war spirit which it utilized.

Meanwhile armed neutrality had proved worse than futile. Wilson himself acknowledged it. In finally asking for a war declaration, he said that "armed neutrality, it now appears, is impracticable." In fact, he continued, ". . . it is worse than ineffectual; it is likely only to produce what it was meant to prevent; it is practically certain to draw us into the war without either the rights or the effectiveness of belligerents."<sup>41</sup> This was not very comforting to the anti-war Congressmen whom he had persuaded to support the measure nor to

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the “wilful twelve” whom he had denounced for blocking its passage.

“There is one choice,” Wilson continued in his war message, “we cannot make, we are incapable of making: we will not choose the path of submission and suffer the most sacred rights of our nation and our people to be ignored or violated.” This reference to our “most sacred rights” was the keynote of a transition in his message from the materialistic question of traffic in the war zone to the idealistic purposes which he sought to throw into the foreground as motivating forces. Having earlier assumed that Germany had forced us into the war by her submarine policies, he now interpreted the whole conflict, as he assumed that all right-minded people should, in terms of right against wrong. We, of course, would crusade for the right. “The right,” he said, “is more precious than peace” — the right of all peoples to live under governments of their own choosing and of small nations to be secure against powerful aggressors. “The world must be made safe for democracy.” Autocratic governments must be brought down and militarism banished forever. The nations must be led to abjure war and settle their differences through “a steadfast concert of peace, maintained by a partnership of democratic nations.” This was a war to end war, and to establish perpetual peace on a basis of universal democracy.<sup>42</sup>

If on the materialistic side Wilson had interpreted

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the conflict of blockades with faulty logic, he had likewise based his idealistic purposes, noble as they were, upon false hypotheses. It is clear to all who have eyes to see that neither side had a monopoly of virtue or vice, that right and wrong were pretty equally divided, that the same was true of militarism (including navalism), and of selfish ambitions to exploit weak peoples. He was also unwarranted in assuming that the "military masters" of one side "deliberately" caused the war for world conquest, and that democratic nations will not go to war of their own accord. As it turned out the "right" side won completely. But it would seem unkind to remind the reader of the sort of "righteousness" it established, with Wilson's approval.

Whatever the "great silent masses" may have felt at the time, it was widely assumed that they followed the overwhelming trend of articulate forces toward war. Wilson's reelection a few months before had been regarded as a popular mandate to keep us out of it. Referring to the question of our entering the war, as late as February 26, 1917, after the submarine warfare had been resumed, he had said, "The American people do not desire it." <sup>48</sup> But on April 2 he assumed that they did. And the platform, the press, and the most boisterous of the mobs yelled approval. On the surface it appeared that this democratic country was hell-bent for war.

Congress responded to what it regarded, rightly or wrongly, as a popular mandate. Large majorities had



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formerly opposed such a step. They had countered the unneutral course of the Administration with open or suppressed opposition. They had fewer illusions than most of their constituents. What to do? Some had honestly changed their opinions, perhaps by a process of rationalization, and had no moral conflict at the time. Others, it seems, were gravely doubtful but came to feel that political expediency demanded their support of the war declaration. Even if a majority of the people did not favor it at the time, once we were in, the war psychology would be overwhelming. But there was a minority in both Houses who, in defiance of the war psychology, dared oppose the fatal step. Most of these were from localities known to be predominantly anti-war, with more or less pro-German leanings. A precious few dared back their convictions in defiance of the President’s course, though assured that it would probably mean political suicide. Claude Kitchin was among this precious few. His state was strongly for the President, and, with the single exception of E. Y. Webb,\* he was the only one of its participants in national councils who dared oppose the war resolution.<sup>44</sup>

“His friends labored in vain to dissuade him from taking this step, assuring him that it meant the ruin of his political career.” They urged that the measure was certain to pass by an overwhelming majority, and hence

\* Webb had to retire before the vote was taken because of illness, but was paired against the resolution.

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that his opposition would be futile; that he ought to subordinate his personal views to the interests of party harmony and national unity; that, in view of the rising war spirit, his course would result only in political suicide. "Democratic Senators from his and other states, Chairman Flood, and other prominent members of his party in the Lower House combined their arguments to convince him that he owed a greater obligation to his party than to his own personal views, but the majority leader was obdurate." \* <sup>45</sup>

Kitchin had fought in all conscience — against heavy political odds — for a course which he devoutly believed to be right. If he had been a time-serving politician rather than the statesman that he was he would doubtless have shifted his stand with fitting rationalization.

Instead, said the New York *World*, "Mr. Kitchin began agitating his pacifist sentiment even before the House assembled this morning. The 'peace-at-any-price' members rallied around him, and with common consent, made him their leader." <sup>46</sup>

Yet, withal, his decision was not made without considerable mental conflict. Even after he had written his speech against the war resolution — one of the very few speeches of his life in which he used a manuscript — he debated the propriety of his move with his own con-

\* Mr. A. L. Brooks, prominent lawyer of Greensboro, North Carolina, says that he was with Kitchin on the evening before the war resolution debate, that having read the proposed speech, he strongly advised his lifelong friend not to make it (though he agreed with its purport); but his arguments were unavailing.





*Photo by Buck's Studio*

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science, his intimate friends, and his wife. His conscience told him he was right; most of his friends said positively *no*; his wife said follow your convictions to the last and we’ll share the consequences.<sup>47</sup>

Came the fateful night of April 5–6, 1917, when the House was to decide the war resolution. The Senate had already favored it with only six dissenting votes. The House session, electrified by capacity floors and galleries to the end, was prolonged until almost dawn.

Kitchin’s speech came a little after midnight. Even the hostile New York *World* admitted that he “made an impressive figure, . . . garbed in a blue business suit, a high white vest, and a black string tie. His delivery was excellent. His full, round voice was a trifle husky [due to the worry of sleepless nights], and as he read from five sheets of typed manuscript, he transmuted some of its periods into characteristic idioms of the South.” The *World* acknowledged that he made the chief speech of the night.<sup>48</sup>

At that midnight hour, with floors and galleries tense, Kitchin said:

“Mr. Chairman, in view of the many assumptions of loyalty and patriotism on the part of some of those who favor the resolution, and insinuations by them of cowardice and disloyalty on the part of those who oppose it, offshoots, doubtless, of a passionate moment, let me at once remind the House that it takes neither moral nor physical courage to declare a war for others to fight.

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[Applause.] It is evidence of neither loyalty nor patriotism for one to urge others to get into a war when he knows that he himself is going to keep out.

“The depth of my sorrow, the intensity of my distress in contemplating the measureless step proposed, God only knows. The right and necessity of this momentous resolution are addressed to the individual judgment of the Members of the House. Too grave is the responsibility for anyone to permit another to stand sponsor for his conscience.

“Profoundly impressed with the gravity of the situation, appreciating to the fullest the penalties which a war-mad moment will impose, my conscience and judgment, after mature thought and fervent prayer for rightful guidance, have marked out clearly the path of my duty, and I have made up my mind to walk it, if I go barefooted and alone. [Applause.] I have come to the undoubting conclusion that I should vote against this resolution. [Applause.] If I had a single doubt, I would with profoundest pleasure resolve it in favor of the view of the Administration and of a large majority of my colleagues, who have so recently honored me with their confidence. I know that I shall never criticize any Member for advocating this resolution. I concede — I feel — that he casts his vote in accordance with sincere conviction. I know, too, that for my vote I shall be not only criticized, but denounced from one end of the country to the other. The whole yelp-

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ing pack of defamers and revilers in the nation will at once be set upon my heels.

“My friends, I cannot leave my children lands and riches — I cannot leave them fame — but I can leave them the name of an ancestor, who, mattering not the consequences to himself, never dared to hesitate to do his duty as God gave him to see it. [Applause.]

“Half the civilized world is now a slaughter-house for human beings. This nation is the last hope of peace on earth, good will toward men. I am unwilling for my country by statutory command to pull up the last anchor of peace in the world and extinguish during the long night of a world-wide war the only remaining star of hope for Christendom. I am unwilling by my vote to-day for this nation to throw away the only remaining compass to which the world can look for guidance in the paths of right and truth, of justice and humanity, and to leave only force and blood to chart hereafter the path for mankind to tread.

“By passage of this resolution we enter the war, and the universe becomes one vast drama of horrors and blood — one boundless stage upon which will play all the evil spirits of earth and hell. All the demons of inhumanity will be let loose for a rampage throughout the world. Whatever be the future, whatever be the rewards or penalties of this nation’s step, I shall always believe that we could and ought to have kept out of this war.

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“Great Britain every day, every hour, for two years has violated American rights on the seas. We have persistently protested. She has denied us not only entrance into the ports of the Central Powers but has closed to us by force the ports of neutrals. She has unlawfully seized our ships and our cargoes. She has rifled our mails. She has declared a war zone sufficiently large to cover all the ports of her enemy. She made the entire North Sea a military area — strewed it with hidden mines and told the neutral nations of the world to stay out or be blown up. We protested. No American ship was sunk, no American life was destroyed, because we submitted and did not go in. We kept out of war. We sacrificed no honor. We surrendered permanently no essential rights. We knew that these acts of Great Britain, though in plain violation of international law and of our rights on the seas, were not aimed at us. They were directed at her enemy. They were inspired by military necessity. Rather than plunge this country into war, we were willing to forego, for the time, our rights. I approved that course then; I approve it now.

“Germany declares a war zone sufficiently large to cover the ports of her enemy. She infests it with submarines and warns the neutral world to stay out, though in plain violation of our rights and of international law. We know that these acts are aimed not directly at us but intended to injure and cripple



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her enemy, with which she is in a death struggle.

“We refuse to yield; we refuse to forego our rights for the time. We insist upon going in.

“In my judgment, we could keep out of the war with Germany as we kept out of the war with Great Britain, by keeping our ships and our citizens out of the war zone of Germany as we did out of the war zone of Great Britain. And we would sacrifice no more honor, surrender no more rights in the one case than in the other. Or we could resort to armed neutrality, which the President recently urged and for which I voted on March 1.

“But we are told that Germany has destroyed American lives while Great Britain destroyed only property. Great Britain destroyed no American lives, because this nation kept her ships and her citizens out of her war zone which she sowed with hidden mines.

“But are we quite sure that the real reason for war with Germany is the destruction of lives as distinguished from property, that to avenge the killing of innocent Americans and to protect American lives war becomes a duty?

“Mexican bandits raided American towns, shot to death sleeping men, women, and children in their own home. We did not go to war to avenge these deaths. We sent an armed expedition into Mexico to hunt down and punish the bandits. Away out from the American border the soldiers of Carranza, of the Mexican Gov-

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ernment, which we had recognized, met our soldiers, shot the American flag from the hands of an American soldier, shot down to the death our soldiers, and Carranza, instead of disavowing the dastardly act, defiantly approved and ratified it. Yet we did not go to war to avenge the destruction of American lives and the insult and assault on the American flag. We were willing to forego our rights rather than plunge this country into war while half the world was in conflagration. I approved that course then; I approve it now.

“Why can we not, why should we not, forego for the time being the violation of our rights by Germany, and do as we did with Great Britain, do as we did with Mexico, and thus save the universe from being wrapped in the flames of war?

“I have hoped and prayed that God would forbid our country going into war with another for doing that which perhaps, under the same circumstances, we ourselves would do.

“Are we quite sure that in a war with Germany or Japan, if our fleet was bottled up, helpless, and our ships of commerce had been swept from the seas, all our ports closed by the enemy's fleet, imports of fuel and food and clothing for our people and ammunition for our soldiers were denied, with our very life trembling in the balance, we would not, in the last struggle for existence, strike our enemy with the only weapon of the sea remaining, though in violation of interna-

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tional law? Would one contend that, under the circumstances, our submarine commanders should permit the landing at the ports of the enemy of arms and ammunition with which to shoot down our brave American boys when they had it in their power to prevent it? Would we demand of our submarine commanders that they give the benefit of the doubt to questions of international law rather than to the safety of our country and the lives of our soldiers?

“War upon the part of a nation is sometimes necessary and imperative. But here no invasion is threatened. Not a foot of our territory is demanded or coveted. No essential honor is required to be sacrificed. No fundamental right is asked to be permanently yielded or suspended. No national policy is contested. No part of our sovereignty is questioned. Here the overt act, ruthless and brutal though it be, is not aimed directly at us. The purpose of the proposed enemy is not our injury, either in property or life. The whole aim and purpose and effort are directed at a powerful enemy with which she is in a life and death struggle.

“The causes for which we are now asked to declare war could have been given with equal — yea, greater — force thirty days or ten days after the first step taken by the German Army in its march toward Paris. They existed then.

“The House and the country should thoroughly understand that we are asked to declare war not to pro-



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protect alone American lives and American rights on the high seas. We are to make the cause of Great Britain, France, and Russia, right or wrong, our cause. We are to make their quarrel, right or wrong, our quarrel. We are to fight out, with all the resources in men, money, and credit of the Government and its people a difference between the belligerents of Europe to which we were and are utter strangers. Nothing in that cause, nothing in that quarrel, has or does involve a moral or equitable or material interest in, or obligation of, our Government or our people.

“To this program every impulse of patriotism, every sense of right, every feeling of humanity, every sentiment of loyalty, every obligation of duty within me combine in forbidding my consent until the Government and its people, through its rightful and constitutional voice — the Congress of the United States — have clearly spoken, in the passage of such a resolution as is now before the House. Then, and then only, will it become the patriotic duty of each Member of the House and Senate to merge his individual judgment and conviction into those so declared of his country, as it will become the duty of every American, in and out of Congress, to make the judgment and conviction of his country, thus written into statute, his judgment and conviction. [Applause.] The voice of law will command, and a patriotic duty will demand, loyal and earnest and active submission and obedience. Until then



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each should have and does have the inherent right, and it is his bounden duty to himself and to truth, to vote his conviction.

“I can conceive of a brave, loyal, devoted son of a father who contemplates a personal difficulty with another begging and persuading him to refrain, even condemning, and protesting in vain against his proposed step, but when the final word is spoken and blows are about to be given, taking off his coat and struggling with all of his soul and might in defense of that father.

“When this nation, as it doubtless will to-day, speaks the final word through the Congress, I trust I will be found in relation with my Government and my country emulating the example of that son.”

As Kitchin sat down amidst fervent applause the House arose *en masse* as a tribute to his sincerity, magnanimity, and courage. Although seven-eighths of the members present would vote for the war resolution, and although many of them had pleaded with Kitchin not to make that speech, they admired him more at that moment than ever before.<sup>49</sup>

There were a few exceptions. Soon after Kitchin sat down, the fiery Tom Heflin from Alabama sprang to the floor with blood in his eyes.

“‘I say to you, Mr. Speaker,’ roared Heflin, with all the profundity of his famous voice, ‘that had I contemplated such action as that committed by the gentleman from North Carolina, the majority leader of this

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House, I would have made out my resignation as leader first, then have made the speech and resigned from Congress.'

"Hisses, particularly from the group of adherents of the Democratic side, greeted the attack. The galleries took up the sibilant expression of disapproval and Chairman Fitzgerald thrice had to admonish them that they were transgressing the rules of the House."<sup>50</sup>

When the House adjourned, near dawn, after passing the war resolution with fifty dissenting votes — only four of which came from the South, — almost the entire membership crowded around Kitchin, some with tears in their eyes. It was a strange scene. Men who had passionately pleaded for war literally embraced the man who had uttered the most potent appeal for peace. As the group thinned down, moving on to the cloak-room, corridors, and elevators, some of his most intimate friends told him in confidence that they and many others would have voted as he did if they had dared.<sup>51</sup>

As reported in the militant press, however, the effect of Kitchin's speech "was to provoke the most bitter criticism of him on the part of a majority of his colleagues in both parties and widespread discussion regarding the propriety of his continuing to hold his chairmanship. No active move was made in the direction of requesting the resignation of Mr. Kitchin to-

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night; but it is not improbable that one will crystallize within the next few hours.” This was the report of Louis Seibold in the *World*.<sup>52</sup>

The *Times* editorially demanded his resignation. One of its correspondents opined that “the Honorable Claude Kitchin, so-called Democratic leader from North Carolina, probably has not been disappointed in his prophecy that he expected to be severely criticized for his unpatriotic stand. . . .”<sup>53</sup>

“The North Carolina Society in the City of Baltimore sent him a telegram repudiating his conduct as unworthy of his state. Southerners generally cannot understand why men who are not in sympathy with our government should be allowed to take an active part in the councils of the Administration.”<sup>54</sup>

Kitchin had prophesied correctly. “The whole yelping pack of defamers and revilers in the nation” were set upon him.

But all the ado that was made by the press about ousting him from the leadership simmers down to the following, as stated by his colleague, E. Y. Webb: “One or two hot-headed Democrats exclaimed that they were in favor of calling a caucus and removing Kitchin as the Democratic floor leader; whereupon angry words were flung at these proponents, with the statement, ‘You can call your caucus, and while we are going to vote for the war resolution, we defy you to harm Claude Kitchin or attempt to remove him as our floor

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leader.' Needless to say, the caucus was never called, and Mr. Kitchin remained the popular idol of the House."<sup>55</sup>

When Kitchin returned to his office after a few hours' rest, but little sleep, on the morning of April 6 he was confronted with a flood of telegrams — a flood which soon swelled to a deluge of letters. From these he learned that he was at once the instrument of the devil and the voice of God.

"Go to Germany. They need fertilizer!" \*<sup>56</sup> "The time has come for patriotic citizens to act up or shut up. I hope you will not use your undoubted power to degrade us further."<sup>57</sup> "Your view is narrow and personal and selfish. You are not a big man . . . you lack sand."<sup>58</sup> "There is no explanation of your action except that it was inspired by unadulterated selfishness or by cowardice. Whichever it may have been, it is, in the opinion of the undersigned, equally disgraceful."<sup>59</sup> "As a citizen of North Carolina, I am writing you to express in terms of the strongest character my disapproval of your recent action . . . I am ashamed of her representative's action, yes more than ashamed."<sup>60</sup> "Didn't represent the sentiment of five per cent of people. . . . They are not yellow or members of the petticoat brigade that would shout horror and flee at the sight of a gun."<sup>61</sup>

\* Referring to the infamous propaganda lie that the Germans were converting their dead soldiers into fertilizer.



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“As a loyal North Carolinian, I demand your retirement as party leader.” <sup>62</sup> And so on and on.

As was stated in some of the newspapers, only a minority of the innumerable communications which Kitchin received were thus denunciatory. A considerable majority commended his course. But he was warned by a minister of his district not to be deceived by this fact, for many remained silent because they were “too thoroughly disgusted.” This divine was unable to discover a single person who agreed with Kitchin. “And,” he added, “we are not falling for the martyr stuff either . . . You have totally misconceived the relations of right and wrong . . . If conscience is such a stupendous thing with you, then combine a little of what our fathers called common sense.” <sup>63</sup>

On the other hand —

“Thank God for Claude Kitchin!” <sup>64</sup> “A sane man in the midst of a crazed nation.” <sup>65</sup> “God bless you. Don’t feel lonesome. You are backed by millions of the salt of the earth.” <sup>66</sup> “Millions are with you in spirit, though they lack the courage to say so now.” <sup>67</sup> “You are what I call a MAN.” <sup>68</sup> “It requires courage to do what you have done . . . Would God the whole Congress were composed of such men as you. We would escape a useless and bloody war.” <sup>69</sup> “Thank God for a man with the courage of his convictions.” <sup>70</sup> “I am proud that North Carolina has one representative who is not afraid to stand up for what is right, and who has the courage

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to vote his convictions in spite of the clamor of a subsidized press.”<sup>71</sup> “Takes moral courage to do right against jingo press and money power.”<sup>72</sup> “I am a loyal American citizen, my ancestors coming from England. . . . I fail to see the difference between the transgressions of Germany and England upon our rights.”<sup>73</sup> “You are standing for humanity against commercialism.”<sup>74</sup> “You are right. Life is more than commerce.”<sup>75</sup> “I would rather be in your place than Woodrow Wilson’s.”<sup>76</sup> “The best speech ever delivered in the halls of Congress.”<sup>77</sup> “History will say, ‘the immortal fifty.’ ”<sup>78</sup> “When history has written this matter up it will say, but too late, that Kitchin and his kind were right.” \*<sup>79</sup> Hundreds and hundreds of similar import reiterated again and again —

“Thank God for Claude Kitchin!”

\* Other excerpts from such letters may be found in the Appendix.

## “MAKE THE PROFITEERS PAY”

PROFOUNDLY grieved as he was at the tragic course into which the country had been led, Kitchin never questioned his duty to do all in his power, consistent with his principles, to prosecute the war to a successful conclusion. He made himself actually a martyr to the cause. Working day and night, mostly over money bills, he overtaxed his strength and brought himself to a premature grave. But through it all he kept steadily in mind two major objectives: to soften the blow upon “the great silent masses” and to make the profiteers pay the monetary costs.

In this he incurred a more virulent hostility from the latter — and from their minions of the press — than he ever had evoked by his “pacifism.” Day by day he saw himself ever more grossly caricatured in the public eye. His motives were more crassly made to appear as those of a narrow-minded Southerner using his high position to wreak vengeance upon the North. He was represented as a provincial agrarian, ignorantly and spitefully hostile to business interests. The press all but ignored the many years of study he had devoted to

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financial questions, and his long and creditable service on the Ways and Means Committee. It was blind to the fact that, guided by expert advice, he had come to be regarded as the leading authority in this field in the House. At best he was made to appear "a string-tie statesman" with a "ground-glass mind"; at worst he was represented as a "political imbecile" who "should be driven out of Congress."<sup>1</sup>

To whatever extent these merciless diatribes may have contributed to Kitchin's physical collapse in 1920, when only fifty-one, they were highly successful in fixing in the public mind an enduring picture of him which was entirely false. One of the economic specialists, called in by the Ways and Means Committee for technical advice, said later that, fortified as he normally was against press propaganda, he had read so much about Kitchin's alleged incompetence and narrow provincialism that he had been unconsciously influenced. But, as he came to know him and to work with him, he was more and more impressed with his grasp of financial questions and his breadth of social vision.<sup>2</sup> Numbers of students of the history of that era, whose viewpoints are now essentially in accord with Kitchin's position at that time, have freely admitted to the author that they, too, were misled by the cumulative weight of press propaganda. If discriminating students went so astray, what of the less discerning public?

Impotent to combat the forces arrayed against him,





"DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP"

CARTOON BY ROLLIN KIRBY IN *New York World*.

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Kitchin tried to accept the situation philosophically. He generally ignored even vile epithets. Only once did he yield to the fighting spirit of his father. Nearing North Carolina on a homeward-bound train, soon after his speech against the war declaration, he met with an exasperating situation. He had gone back to the smoking room and found it full. Pausing an instant in the doorway he became aware that he was the topic of conversation. A white-collar roughneck eyed him, and proceeded to exclaim, with coarse vulgarity, that Kitchin should be sent to Germany and there put in the front line trenches or else made into soap. Kitchin thought that the man recognized him and had deliberately sought to humiliate him by cowardly indirection. Overwhelmed by his belligerent heritage from "Cap'm Buck," he seized his burly maligner by the collar, jerked him to his feet, and shook him as a mastiff would shake his prey. Only the blue face and popping eyes of the culprit brought an end to the encounter.<sup>8</sup>

In promising to promote all necessary war measures Kitchin had not pledged blanket support to all policies which the Administration might advocate. Scarcely had war been declared when a conflict arose over the question of resorting immediately to conscription.

Wilson had stated in his war message that belligerency would "involve the immediate addition to the armed forces of the United States, already provided for by



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law in case of war, of at least five hundred thousand men, who should, in my opinion, be chosen upon the principle of universal liability to service, and also the authorization of subsequent additional increments of equal force as they may be needed and can be handled in training.”<sup>4</sup> Within a week Wilson was seeking to exact from a reluctant Congress provisions for a “selective draft.” In the House, the chief leaders and the majority of the members were opposed to such a course.

The militant press and other agencies of propaganda at once set up the hue and cry that recalcitrants and pro-Germans in Congress were obstructing the effective prosecution of the war on the part of the Administration. Again there was the tacit assumption that Congress should abdicate its powers and become a rubber stamp for Administration measures, and that Democratic members in particular were morally obligated to follow their chief.

In reply to such views Speaker Clark told the House that, however regrettable it was to oppose the President, especially when he was the head of one's own party, each branch of the government has its own functions and its own responsibilities. The President “has his functions to perform and, as far as I have been able to observe, he is not bashful about performing them. The House and Senate have their functions to perform, and, if we are men, we will perform them.”

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[Applause.] A member who violated his convictions because they ran counter to those of the President, he concluded, "is not fit to sit in the House or the Senate."<sup>5</sup>

It was held by this group, and by large numbers throughout the nation, that conscription was not justifiable — or even constitutional, in the opinion of many — except when the country was immediately threatened with invasion. Conscription was involuntary servitude; and much worse, if it drafted men to be sent into the hell-pits of Europe.

At least the volunteer system should be tried first and conscription held as a last resort. This was the position of Kitchin, of Clark, of the Committee on Military Affairs, and apparently, at first, of the majority of the members. Even the *New York World*, militant advocate of the draft as it was, reported, as late as April 21, that a poll of the House showed only forty-three per cent of the membership favoring an immediate resort to conscription.<sup>6</sup>

The Administration held that the volunteer system would not produce adequate results. If an overwhelming triumph for the Allies at the earliest possible moment was the objective supremely to be desired, it was doubtless correct in this assumption; but in the light of subsequent developments, what becomes of the premise on which its conclusion was based?

Under its plan of a "selective draft" all men in the



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country between the ages of twenty-one and thirty would be required by law to register for possible military duty, with the penalty of imprisonment for those who failed to do so. The registrants would be classified by various criteria, and local boards would select by lot those to be called in each successive draft. After physical examinations, those declared fit for military service, and not exempt for other reasons, would be sent to training camps to be prepared, physically and psychologically, for the slaughter. And thus, paradoxically, millions of men, most of whom had little or no conception of what it was all about, were to be *compelled* to “*volunteer*” their services as crusaders for the cause of righteousness. “It is in no sense a conscription of the unwilling,” said Wilson; “it is, rather, selection from a nation that has volunteered in mass.”<sup>7</sup>

In the House of Representatives, the Committee on Military Affairs reported a measure which embodied, as a possible objective, the main principles of the Administration program but included an amendment to the effect that the volunteer system should be tried first. It left to the Administration the future decision as to whether this system had failed, and hence the responsibility for employing the selective draft. The Democratic leadership — Kitchin, Clark, Chairman Dent of the Committee on Military Affairs, and others — backed the amendment. At first it seemed likely to

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pass; and Kitchin so informed the President, who once again departed from his usual custom by going in person to Capitol Hill to interview "recalcitrants." Many of these yielded under pressure — enough, in fact, to defeat the amendment.<sup>8</sup> Of the one hundred and nine who voted for it, sixty-four were Democrats, forty-four were Republicans, and one was a Socialist. With the amendment defeated, the President had his way; the country was pledged to send a huge force of conscripts to fight overseas.

Now that human lives were to be forced into the crucible, what of the ever-swelling profits which would accrue to those who remained in safe places? Were lives less sacred than dollars? Such questions were not easily faced with candor by those who were thrilled with the spell of enticing riches. Glamorous profits! In many cases huge fortunes! What temptations!

Hence the force of the conservative business man's contention that if industry, trade, and finance were to be stirred to their utmost endeavors, capital must have abnormal incentives. Private initiative could be quickened only by the lure of mounting profits. If such profits were hampered by high taxes, initiative in war-essential fields would be strangled. Numbers of cartoons were spread through the press of the country playing upon the adage, "Don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs."<sup>9</sup> A version more frank might have

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added, “Feed the bird generously but leave her eggs alone — most of them at least.” This was the attitude of selfish capitalistic groups and of their minions of the press and in politics. Stand-pat Republicans wished to finance such portion of the war-costs as would not be left to posterity by means of much higher tariffs and of all sorts of regressive consumption taxes.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand there were those — including small minorities in Congress — who favored a conscription of wealth, or at least a conscription of all profits in excess of the normal for pre-war years; and who sought in this way to finance the war so far as possible on a pay-as-you-go basis, leaving a minimum of financial burdens for future generations. But these were voices crying in the wilderness.

Between these extremes were plans of varying shades of practicality. The press tended mainly toward the former position; Kitchin and his group, with necessary concessions, toward the latter.<sup>11</sup>

No government on earth had ever faced the necessity of raising such huge sums as did the United States when it entered the World War. It was compelled to meet not merely its own financial needs but also, in large measure, those of the Allies whom it had joined. Their enormous purchases in this country could be maintained only through loans from our government. About a billion dollars, already privately advanced by

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American bankers, became an obligation of the government through the issuing of Liberty Bonds. Thus the burden was transferred to the taxpayers. Altogether the country had to spend over thirty-two billion dollars on the war — aside from what was required to take care of its aftermath, — about a third of which was in “loans” to the Allies. We had joined in “the dance of death” and the piper had to be paid.

But how? And when? And by whom?

From the start the question arose as to how large a proportion of the costs should be paid by taxes and how much should be supplied through popular loans to the government. At first the Wilson Administration said that it should be half and half. But at that time not even the wisest of our economists had much conception of the immensity of the financial burden which the country was assuming. As its extent became gradually apparent, as prospective taxes began to loom, and as protests were shouted from the business world, the Administration weakened. And thus it came into conflict with Kitchen and his Ways and Means Committee. “I am convinced,” wrote Kitchen, “and have been trying to convince others, especially the Treasury Department, that we should raise a much larger proportion of our funds by taxation. . . .”<sup>12</sup> It appeared at first that only about an eighth would be raised in this way, but, thanks to the insistence of Kitchen and others, about a third was thus obtained.



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Of this huge sum, by far the greater part came from more or less steeply graduated taxes on incomes, inheritances, excess profits, and from special taxes on munitions. While the stupendous and unprecedented character of the problem, the potent resistance of the forces of wealth, and the exigencies of practical politics made for obstructions and imperfections; the revenue measures, which were basically Kitchin's, have been commended by leading economists. Such illiberal features as the final acts contained were, in general, the results of compromises either in the House or with the Senate. For Kitchin strove, to the limits of feasibility, to throw the burden upon those most able to bear it, and especially upon the profiteers. And not all the profiteers, by any means, were in the munitions business.<sup>13</sup>

When the Committee on Ways and Means began considering a revenue measure, which from the estimates of the Treasury Department at this early hour would have to quintuple all previous yields, and forecasts of proposed taxes trickled out through the press, storms of protest arose. They poured in from every industry and business in the country. “Ruinous!” was the tragic refrain; “it will drive us out of business!” Congressmen received such floods of letters to the effect, “I am willing to do my part, *but* . . .” that they came to refer to such missives as “but letters.” Many who

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protested, it should be said, were not yet aware of the vastness of prospective war profits nor of the fact that the proposed tax measure was largely contingent upon such profits. Nevertheless the flood of protests continued. "There is not an item in the bill," wrote Kitchin, "which provides for one billion eight hundred million dollars of revenue, that has not been protested against. . . ." <sup>14</sup>

"Everybody," he said, "has been willing that somebody else should pay the taxes. Men have come to the committee and told us how we should raise taxes by hitting the other fellow. As soon as they left, other men have come to advise us to tax the fellows who had just left us, . . . so we decided to put it on all of them." <sup>15</sup> One or two examples will suffice. A representative of an American insurance company proposed that *foreign* companies be heavily taxed on their business in this country. A cotton exporter of Wilmington, North Carolina, held that the tax should be put upon munitions and not upon ordinary business. <sup>16</sup>

On May 10, 1917, the Ways and Means Committee submitted to the House a hastily drawn revenue bill. It had some defects, as events proved, but was fundamentally sound. In defending this bill — which he had largely written — Kitchin reminded the House of the unanimity with which that body had formerly endorsed war *loans*, throwing a burden upon their children and their children's children; and expressed the

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hope that it would be likewise generous in exacting a just share from the current generation. He abjured the members to forget self and state and district, and to consider only, “How can I best serve my country in this hour of trial?”<sup>17</sup>

“It is not for the man who goes out to the front to meet the bayonets and guns of the enemy to reason why,” he said. “It is for him to obey and go. In obedience to the call of country, a million and more of the best young men of this country will sooner or later face the enemy’s guns. No man who has to pay a dollar of the tax in this bill who remains at home while the boys are at the front should protest against it. [Applause.]” Money, he said, must be conscripted as well as men.<sup>18</sup>

“The bill does not suit me in every particular,” said Kitchin, nor did it suit any other of the twenty-three members of the Ways and Means Committee. It was necessarily a compromise, both among themselves and with the Treasury Department. For his own part Kitchin would have made the taxes higher. “If we could we should defray the whole expense by taxes.”<sup>19</sup>

“Your children and mine had nothing to do with bringing on this war. They had no vote on it. Many who will have to pay the bonds are yet unborn. It would be unjust and cruel and cowardly to shift upon them the burden of a single dollar more than was absolutely necessary. . . .”<sup>20</sup>

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"The taxes that are proposed are enormous; they are going to be hard to bear, but not a tax in the bill will cripple a single industry nor will it seriously embarrass a single individual."<sup>21</sup>

Although he was fundamentally in favor of throwing the full burden upon profits, he had reluctantly agreed to put a part upon the consumption of "luxuries and semi-luxuries." Even so: "I have been surprised and amazed to observe that there have been, by a hundred times, more protests and more complaints against taxation from men throughout the United States from every class of people who are to be taxed by this bill, and found more unwillingness to pay than I ever heard or observed during the preparation of the many revenue bills in peace times which I have ever assisted in framing. If one-tenth of what has been told us of who and whose industries will in the first instance pay these taxes is true, instead of raising one billion eight hundred million dollars, we would not raise a hundred million. There is hardly an item in the bill that has not been condemned as bankrupting and disastrous. We are told that we will collect nothing from excess profits and nothing from income because the bill will destroy all sources of income and profit. . . . *They are willing to fight this war out if somebody else will do the fighting. They are willing to pay for the war if somebody else will do the paying . . .*" \*

\* Italics mine.





CARTOON BY BERRYMAN IN *Washington Star*.

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The bill added, as Kitchin explained, some six hundred and forty-one millions to existing revenues, mostly from excess profits, incomes and inheritances.<sup>22</sup>

When it came to taxing luxuries, Kitchin said that he never before knew that life had so many requirements. He found that everything from a glass of beer to a racing yacht was an absolute necessity of existence. Tennis equipment, fishing tackle, perfumery, powder puffs, Coca Cola, and innumerable other products appeared to be "prime requirements of human existence."<sup>23</sup>

In the general increase of taxes there was even a boosting of the tariff, defended on the ground that otherwise heavy excise taxes might put domestic industries at a disadvantage in foreign competition — a poor argument since our major competitors were burdened with even heavier taxes. This was the hardest of all the compromises for Kitchin to make. He said on the floor, "I am going to shut my eyes and vote for it" — a concession which he later repented.<sup>24</sup>

But the phase of the bill most fatal to Kitchin's standing in the public eye was the increase in postal rates for second-class mail. For many years the government had been carrying newspapers and periodicals for about one-ninth of the cost. Meanwhile these had come to be increasingly composed of commercial advertising. Likewise, mail-order firms were enjoying a huge sub-

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sidy from the distribution of millions of their heavy catalogues. The matter had long been a public scandal but had never been corrected because of the reluctance of Congressmen to antagonize the press, with all its power in shaping public opinion. In 1911 the Hughes Commission had investigated, revealed the facts, and recommended at least the doubling of the rate; but nothing had been done about it.<sup>25</sup>

Now that every available dollar must be secured and every edge must be cut, Kitchin felt that such publications should fall in line. So he asked them to pay a third, instead of a ninth, of the cost of handling their products. The new plan was based upon a system of zones, somewhat like those of the parcel post, and was similarly designed to compensate the government in proportion to the cost of transportation.<sup>26</sup>

In support of his position Kitchin said on the floor that to deliver the publications of the Curtis Publishing Company (*The Saturday Evening Post*, *The Ladies' Home Journal*, and *The Country Gentlemen*) had cost the government during the preceding year five and a third million dollars; that the government had received in return less than six hundred thousand dollars, thus providing a subsidy of almost five million dollars. *Collier's* had been delivered at a cost of seventeen hundred thousand in return for about a hundred and ninety thousand. Such cases, along with general averages,



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showed that the government was paying about eight-ninths of the cost of delivering dailies and periodicals. In view of the fact that such publications were generally run for private profit, such favoritism was bad enough in peace time; it was intolerable in the emergency then existing.

In a later discussion, the point that so large a proportion of the space of such publications was given over to advertising elicited from Mr. Chandler of New York the argument that this advertising gave the public information about the advertised products.

"Ought not the gentleman to refer to it as misinformation?" replied Kitchin.

Mr. Cooper of Wisconsin interposed. He gave an instance of a firm that had spent four hundred dollars on an advertisement and had made two thousand dollars profit on business thus gained.

"I am surprised at the gentleman," said Kitchin. . . .  
"If he comes to the conclusion that we ought not to raise this rate on account of what —"

"The gentleman has no right to come to any conclusion in my mind. I stated some facts to him."

"The gentleman did not seem to be able to come to any conclusion himself, so I thought I would come to one for him." (Laughter.)

"Oh, I have often seen men," Cooper retorted, "who thought that it answered a question to say something smart or funny." (Laughter again.)



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“If I offended I really apologize to the gentleman,” rejoined Kitchin, placatingly. (More laughter.)

Replying to the argument that the increased rate would be “ruinous” to many publications, Kitchin suggested that they might increase their charges for advertising, so that the beneficiaries, rather than the public, would pay. Or, if necessary, they might increase the subscription price.<sup>27</sup>

The bill doubled the rate of the excess profits tax, already established to help finance preparedness, raising it from eight to sixteen per cent on the net profits of corporations and partnerships (the latter not having been included in the preceding measure) above eight per cent of the invested capital. Kitchin explained that practically every country then at war had such a tax. The rate in Great Britain had been sixty per cent but had recently been raised to eighty; in France it was fifty; in Germany forty; in Italy ten to thirty; in Russia twenty to forty. It was estimated that the new rate would raise some two hundred million dollars of additional revenue. It was doubtless an error not to make the rate progressive; this was later done at the instance of Mr. Simmons, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. Not that Kitchin himself was opposed to progressive rates. The House bill was a compromise in many particulars. If he could have had his way, he said at the time, he would have carried the rates as

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high as eighty per cent.<sup>28</sup> "I want the man who comes home with an empty sleeve to feel that the Congress which sent him away has not favored the profit-taker who stayed at home."<sup>29</sup>

The chief conflict between Kitchen and the House, on the one hand, and Simmons, the Senate, and the Administration, on the other, was over the question as to whether the tax should be based upon "excess profits" or "war profits." The former, as embraced in the House bill, was more inclusive and presented more permanent possibilities. It might more easily be continued when the war was over, to pay the debt. It was based upon the principle of taxing all profits above eight per cent of the invested capital — such capital to be reckoned on a basis of the market value of stock, plus surplus and undivided profits. The "war profits" plan would have taxed, on a graduated scale, profits in excess of the average for each business in the three years preceding the war.<sup>30</sup>

Kitchen held — and his position was approved by Professor T. S. Adams of Yale<sup>31</sup> and by an advisory commission of other prominent economists — that many of the richest profiteers, mainly corporate, had made excessive profits in the pre-war years, which fact would afford them inordinate exemptions under the Senate plan; while those who had been relatively unprosperous in those years would be penalized.<sup>32</sup> Such farmers and small business men as had not been par-

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ticularly prosperous before 1914 would suffer in comparison with such interests as munitions, automobiles, textiles, tobacco, power, communications and the like. Under the Senate plan, Kitchin wrote to the President of the North Carolina Farmers' Union (who had indorsed this plan without full knowledge of the facts) “the farmers of North Carolina would pay more . . . than all its cotton mills . . . In the three pre-war years the farmers made no profits, certainly less than six per cent.”<sup>33</sup>

Interestingly enough, the excess profits tax advocated by Kitchin would have borne more heavily in proportion on Southern corporation than on Northern, due to the fact that most Southern concerns operated on less capital investment and more borrowings in proportion to earnings. This fact was pointed out to Kitchin by Stuart Cramer and Robert S. Brookings.<sup>34</sup> It was an effective answer to the increasingly vicious propaganda of the press that Kitchin was determined to make the North pay for the war. Or rather it *would* have been effective if it could have been presented to the public, but it did not suit the purposes of a hostile press to note such a fact in the North.

True, Kitchin obviously had at heart the interests of the farmers and other less fortunate classes; but it was not a matter of sectionalism. It is well known that the farmers of the country — the least responsible of all classes for our entering the war — actually en-

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joyed a considerable, though very short-lived, prosperity during our belligerency, for the first time, in most cases, since the Civil War. This was so unusual that it called forth the same sort of sneers from business groups as the fact that some laborers were able to wear silk shirts. To such groups this was not a mere bit of historic justice — ephemeral enough in all conscience; — it was justification for the colossal profiteering in high places. "Everybody's doing it!" . . . Hence taxes — if there must be such nuisances — should be widely distributed, and not concentrated on those who were feathering their nests in a large way.

With such a viewpoint Kitchin naturally had no sympathy. Here was a farmer of his acquaintance, he said, worth about twenty thousand dollars. He had made no profits in the pre-war years. In the true sense of the word, he had *never* made any profits. He stood to make about twelve thousand dollars that year. Under the Senate bill he would have to pay four thousand dollars war profits tax. And here was U. S. Steel, with a capitalization of one billion five hundred million dollars, making two hundred and seventy-one million dollars profits; yet under the Senate bill it would pay little or no tax, because of the high profits it had made in the pre-war years. This was discriminating against the farmer."

The chief objection to Kitchin's plan — which, by the way, was the one most widely adopted by other



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belligerents — was that it would be difficult to administer. On this question he obtained advice from other governments which had used it. He inquired, for example, of Sir Thomas White, Canada's Minister of Finance, whether such a tax, then employed in Canada, was difficult to administer. The reply was that it was difficult but not impossible; it had actually been administered in Canada with surprising success and substantial justice.<sup>86</sup>

After a controversy in which Kitchin's committee was alleged to have refused to enter a joint conference unless this point were yielded, a compromise was effected which conceded the main points that Kitchin had demanded. The compromise made possible the revenue act of October 3, 1917; but it left in abeyance the question of the proper basis for a profits tax.<sup>87</sup>

The President and the Treasury Department favored the Senate viewpoint and sought persistently to bring Kitchin into line. But Kitchin was as obstinate as Wilson, and, on this point, he at last convinced the President. This was probably the occasion referred to by Tumulty when Wilson was said to have thrown up his hands, confessed that Kitchin was right, and promised to instruct accordingly his friends on Capitol Hill.<sup>88</sup>

It should be said, however, that in some ways the Senate amendments to the House bill, in the summer of 1917, represented improvements from the stand-

point of the common man. The House had been too much impressed with the need for haste in meeting a war emergency; the Senate was more deliberate. After all, claimed the Senate, these taxes could be made retroactive, so why hurry? Hence Mr. Simmons's Finance Committee permitted hearings from the various groups concerned, which the House Ways and Means Committee had not done. The difference worked both ways. The Senate added the progressive feature of the profits tax and dropped the increase in the tariff which Kitchin, with later regrets, had shut his eyes to swallow. It included in the scope of the profits tax all individuals, except salaried and professional men, whose incomes were in excess of six thousand dollars. The House bill had not included individuals, "for the reason," said Kitchin, "that corporations paid no surtaxes and partnerships, as such, paid no tax at all, while the individual paid both the normal and the surtax under the income tax laws; and further, because, if an individual is included in the excess profits tax, it would give the corporation a big advantage over the individual in the same business," in that the corporation was permitted to exempt salaries as part of its expenses. However, Kitchin finally agreed to include individuals, provided salaried and professional men be included the same as farmers and business men. His insistence on the latter point further stirred the wrath of his defamers.<sup>39</sup>



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There was considerable friction between the Kitchin group and the Simmons group. “I could get no chance to talk with Simmons,” wrote R. N. Page to Kitchin; “his committee was continuously in session. I did talk with some other members of the Senate, but that crowd is a hopeless lot. They seem utterly unable to get the viewpoint of the mass of the folk, and always have an ear for the representatives of special interests. Ollie James ranting about ‘the poor man’s doctor,’ when the patent medicine people are laughing in their sleeve over his service to them, is a fair sample of their concern for the folk.”<sup>40</sup>

When the Senate Finance Committee proposed a tax on bank checks, to be borne, of course, by the depositor, Kitchin responded, “I will fight it to the last ditch.”<sup>41</sup> And he did.

The joint committee finally agreed upon a bill. Under its provisions the normal income tax was made four per cent on net incomes of over five thousand dollars (above exemptions), and the surtax was steeply graduated up to sixty-three per cent. The excess profits tax was a compromise, more favorable to Kitchin than to Simmons. The 1911–1913 profits were made the basis of computation only within the following limits: — in every case in which the pre-war profits were under six per cent or over ten per cent, Kitchin’s plan of taxing on a basis of capitalization would hold; and the tax would range from twelve to sixty per cent. The tax

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on "luxuries" would be lessened. The second-class postage rates would be increased by gradations according to Kitchin's zone system, but the increase would apply only to the portions of publications given over to advertising.<sup>42</sup>

Although the yield of this measure was well beyond expectations, the enormous drains upon the Treasury necessitated manifold increases the next year. From one billion eight hundred million the estimate jumped to eight billion. This was one-third of the twenty-four billions to be expended; the rest would be raised by bonds. "Who Will Pay the Taxes?" Kitchin inquired in the *Forum*. "Wealth, and not poverty," was his reply. But it would be an exceedingly difficult task to carry out, for there was bound to be powerful resistance from taxpayers and it would be impossible to avoid injustices in individual cases. The country would have to be made to understand the vastness of the burden.<sup>43</sup>

On this point Senator Simmons gives an illuminating illustration in his *Memoirs*. A wealthy Southerner came to him in 1916 insistent that he use his influence with Wilson to put the country into the war against Germany. "I pointed out," says Simmons, "the immense cost that entrance into the war would involve in money and men; but he replied, 'That makes no difference; we must fight. The people will pay the cost



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cheerfully. Take our incomes and we will save the principal.’ I reported his attitude and statement to Wilson.

“The war came, we piled taxes on excess profits and incomes, and my wealthy friend soon came back. He rushed into my office and exclaimed, ‘Simmons, you Congressmen and Senators have gone stark mad. You are ruining us.’ . . . I then arose from my seat and reminded him of our previous conference, with my warning. I told him that he could count himself fortunate if we merely took his income. Before the war was over a capital levy might be necessary. He threw up his hands and left.”<sup>44</sup> It may be added that most of his class were not so easily frightened away.

In the framing of the previous revenue bill there had been a feeling of haste, at least on the part of the House; in 1918 it was decided that ample time would be taken, if the provisions had to be made retroactive. So it was not until February of the following year that the final enactment was effected — by a “lame-duck” session. Hearings were held, said Kitchin, from “every class of people” and “every class of business,” after which noted economists were called in, along with experts from the Treasury Department. “We had before us the revenue acts of past years and the data connected with them. We had the revenue acts of the Civil War. . . . We studied the policy, the operation of these acts, and the collections under them. We had

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before us the acts of Great Britain, France, Canada, and other belligerents passed during this war." And much more. All of which were studied — virtually memorized by Kitchin, it appeared from his offhand citations on the floor. It was most remarkable how, in a running debate, he was able to quote momentarily a wide variety of facts and figures pertaining to the fiscal experiences of various countries in various wars.<sup>45</sup>

In support of the greatly increased revenues, he again urged the cause of posterity. All possible paying must be done while paying was good, for taxes at best would be higher ever after. "I make the prediction that never again will the government get along any one year on less than four billions." For many years interest alone would be double the total expenditure in pre-war years — which at most was under three-fourths of a billion.<sup>46</sup>

Besides, "Is there any man inside or outside this House that believes, no matter what the terms of the peace may be, no matter how much talk there is or has been or will be about disarmament or limitation of armaments after the war, that the army and the navy of the United States will ever cost us less than a billion a year? It ought not to cost us nearly so much. Many of us may hope that it will not, but vain will be the hope."<sup>47</sup>

Add to these costs, he said, about a billion for pen-

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sions in various shapes and another billion for new functions of government; and what reason have you to be optimistic about taxes? <sup>48</sup>

Was the bill “ruinous” to business? “In 1917,” he said, “according to Treasury estimates upon the returns so far tabulated, the net (corporate) income will reach about ten and a half billions, about six and a half billions more than in the pre-war period. After paying all the taxes of that year they still will have over a hundred per cent more than pre-war profits. After paying the taxes levied by *this* bill, . . . there will be left to the corporations over seventeen hundred millions more income and profits than their pre-war average . . . [almost a hundred per cent increase again].” <sup>49</sup>

Now that the war had produced abnormally high profits, he said, it was the time to levy abnormally high taxes. Otherwise we might be left in the lurch in subsequent years. And he repeated the point that the boys whom we had sent to the front, and their innocent children’s children, should not be cumbered with a financial burden shunted on to them for the sake of inordinate profits for corporations. “I think there is a small element . . . who believe that the war should be made an opportunity for a few people to amass fabulous fortunes; . . . and that the Government ought to furnish to such few a field of investment, like Government bonds, for the blood money. . . .” <sup>50</sup>

He had but one regret about the whole measure: its

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regressive features in the form of consumption taxes, and he later said that efforts would be made to eliminate these. When the war ended in the autumn of 1918 and the Treasury advised that the yield of the bill might be cut from eight to six billion dollars, he sought with partial success to make a material reduction in consumption taxes.<sup>51</sup>

As finally passed in February, 1919, the so-called Revenue Act of 1918 cast about four-fifths of its burden upon incomes, inheritances, and excess profits — on graduated scales. Not enough perhaps, but more than there would have been if such men as Kitchin and La Follette had not been in Congress.

Such "incorrigibles" paid dearly, to be sure, in the esteem of the masses whose interests they had fought to conserve. Having antagonized interests directly or indirectly affecting the press, they suffered the consequences of malicious propaganda. The main difference was that La Follette and others lived to vindicate themselves; while Kitchin did not, but was left to fall into obscurity or to go down to posterity as the legendary bigot and ignoramus that he was pictured in the press.

He had committed the unpardonable sin of antagonizing the press: first, by fighting against the country's militarization; second, by seeking to have the Government disclaim responsibility for a lucrative but



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hazardous war traffic; third, by striving to prevent our embroilment in a quarrel that was not our affair; fourth, by insisting that those who garnered the bloody harvest pay the monetary cost; and last, — his sin against the Holy Ghost — by demanding in that hour of tribulation the withdrawal of a part of the Government’s annual ninety-million-dollar subsidy to the press.

Kitchin’s chief tactical error was his refusal to mollify harsh realities with euphemisms. He persisted in calling a spade a spade, regardless of the powerful groups whose interests his policies affected. And, when the press sought to glorify cupidity and to sanctify its own share in the spoils, he remained fearlessly frank. This, of course, was putting his head in a noose.

From the moment it became known that the Ways and Means Committee was considering the increased rate for second-class matter, the press of the country, with apparently few exceptions, singled out Kitchin — though he seems not to have been the first member to propose the move — as the chief object of its wrath. From the spring of 1917 to the spring of 1919 — and intermittently thereafter till his death — he was pilloried almost daily in the newspapers and periodicals of the country, no section being excepted, not even his own state.

It was not a matter of party; for leading Democratic organs were as vicious and relentless in their attacks

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as were Republican ones — at least until the latter began making political capital out of the drive to “rid the country of Kitchinism” in the Congressional campaign of 1918. Not until then were the falsehoods of such Democratically inclined organs as the *Times* and the *World* turned against them, like boomerangs.

Even religious and liberal publications joined in the onslaught. The *Christian Herald* was not above lobbying to get “the iniquitous postage zone system” repealed and making sarcastic references to Kitchin.<sup>52</sup> The New York *Evening Post*, normally liberal and formerly tolerant of Kitchin, now turned against him. “It is clear,” said the *Post*, editorially, “that the quality of his mind unfits him for dealing with the intricate problems of Government finance.” It alleged that every time he was confronted with opposition or criticism he imagined plots and conspiracies.<sup>53</sup>

The most widely reiterated story — chief basis for the most scathing attacks upon Kitchin in the North — was the one concocted by the *Times* in January, 1917. He was alleged to have said that the North, particularly the Northeast, had foisted “preparedness” upon the country, and that he intended to make the North pay the bill. The story had been fully disproved at the time but this was not recognized by the press, which continued to repeat it, with all sorts of variations, for two years thereafter. From the large number of clippings in the Kitchin collection it appears that scarcely

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a paper or news agency in the country failed to ring the changes on this story.\*

In May, 1917, when the move to increase postal rates was first being publicized, the *Times* came forth with further remarks, attributed to Kitchin, of which a diligent search of the *Congressional Record* fails to reveal the slightest trace, and employed this “news” item as a springboard for an editorial revising and elaborating the February attack.<sup>54</sup> It should be said that the method of the *Times* was more subtle than that of such papers as the *Sun*, the *World*, the *Herald* and the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*. The *Times* was generally respectful, and never grossly abusive. But its stories were potent.

Among the numerous variants of the original yarn that went the rounds was Kitchin’s alleged threat: “You newspaper men forced the war; now you have got to pay for it.” The absurdity of this is obvious in view of the fact that the amount asked from the press was less than a thousandth part of the war cost. But it was a good talking point.<sup>55</sup> As the *Sun* and the *World* put it — widely requoted — the zone system was not for revenue but for revenge. One paper remarked that “Kitchin’s chief characteristic is the number of kinds of asses he can make of himself.”<sup>56</sup>

That Kitchin’s support of the increased rates was not occasioned by spite is evidenced by the fact that he

\* Even the *Scientific American* accepted the *Times* story uncritically, and berated Kitchin for stirring sectionalism at a time when the utmost unity was demanded. (Issue of June 15, 1918.)



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had favored such increases since 1911, when the press was not unfriendly to him, and that apparently he was not the author of the provision.

Among the most virulent arraignments came one from that bulwark of "economic royalty," the *New York Sun*. It damned him as "a political imbecile," . . . "a man whose prejudices are as impassioned as his intellect is confused," . . . "a believer in flaying the taxes out of the hides of particular communities . . . to pay for the war out of taxes raised north of the Mason and Dixon Line."<sup>57</sup>

To papers of this stripe he was densely ignorant and narrowly prejudiced — "a small bigot from an ill-favored district in North Carolina," said the *World*. "THE PRIDE OF SCOTLAND NECK," sneered the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, attributing his "stringtie statesmanship" to a "ground-glass mind. . . ." "Cannot Scotland Neck do the country a service," it inquired, "and take Claude Kitchen away from a stage where he does not know his part?"<sup>58</sup> "His talk," said the *Baltimore Sun*, "sounds like that of a crazy man."<sup>59</sup> One paper went so far as to entitle an editorial: "CLAUDE KITCHIN SHOULD BE DRIVEN OUT OF CONGRESS."<sup>60</sup>

In a signed editorial in *Collier's*, Mark Sullivan, taking his usual viewpoint, that of a conservative business man, pictured Kitchen as a "babe-in-the-woods, . . . an awkward child. . . . One might have felt sorry for him — have looked upon the affair as what, indeed,



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it was, the case of a simple and ignorant man with a difficult and unwelcome task thrust upon him; but he neutralized sympathy by trying to cover up helplessness with flippancy and a bullying manner toward his fellow members.”<sup>61</sup>

With the rise of the twin jitters over Bolsheviks and pro-Germans he was inevitably put in both classes, and his internment was demanded. His whole program of taxation was called a Socialistic scheme in disguise, designed to redistribute the wealth. Or worse still, his aim was represented as the very “destruction of wealth.”<sup>62</sup>

It was alleged that, having been driven into supporting a war he disapproved, he ignorantly sought to sabotage the activities of his own country. “From the first,” said the *Sun*, “Mr. Kitchen seems to have proceeded upon the assumption that the war would prove unpopular, and, rather frankly, he has endeavored to make it so.” “That notorious pacifist, Claude Kitchen,” said *Financial America*, was “obstructing war tactics” by his ruinous financial policies.<sup>63</sup>

And what was so badly wrong with his financial policies? He was killing the goose that laid the golden egg!<sup>64</sup> He was butchering the milch cow!<sup>65</sup> What was the incentive for private capital to accumulate profits if the Government was going to take half of them in taxes? Paradoxically, said the *Times*, “business may

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find it cheaper not to make excess profits.”<sup>66</sup> Even the Mexican bandit, said the *Sun*, has better sense “than to burn up the ranch that is paying him blackmail.” Kitchin, it further declared, “devoted himself to crippling the productive agencies of mankind by drying up the fountain-heads of revenue, to blasting madly the fields and gardens of a nation as a Hun might do deliberately to make them a desert.” He fosters “a tax which gives surplus earnings the choice between confiscation and dissipation abroad, and tickets business straight through to hell.”<sup>67</sup> The same paper observed: “There is such a thing as raising revenue and there is such a thing as raising hell. Perhaps Claude Kitchin knows the difference; then again, perhaps not. Anyhow the Senate does.”<sup>68</sup>

And what, pray, had become of all the fine fervor of patriotic zeal which such papers as the *Sun* and the *World* had sought so assiduously to foster — in others? Apparently it had no abode in the profits system. It was not uncommon for Kitchin to receive the bitterest complaints against proposed taxes, on letter-heads that patriotically proclaimed in streamers of red, white and blue: “Give to the Red Cross — give till it hurts.” “Have you done your bit? Buy Liberty Bonds. Don’t be a slacker!”

The whole idea of the profit-takers seemed to be: Let them lend their profits safely and comfortably to the Government, and let the “silk-shirt workers” and



"WELL, HE ALWAYS SUPPORTED THE PORK BARREL  
FLEET."

CARTOON BY W. A. ROGERS IN *New York Herald*.

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the "tin-Lizzie farmers" pay the costs. There is no more sordid commentary on the crassness of the profits system than its frantic greed in this era, and the readiness of its minions of the press to malign every agency that sought to balk its rapacious course.<sup>69</sup>

And what was Kitchin's reply? What could it be? How could he be heard? He really tried for a time to get falsehoods corrected. But he was baying at the moon. And he came to realize it. Then he tried to rationalize the situation by saying that after all it didn't matter; he'd do what seemed to be right and leave the rest to Providence. Of course upon occasions he fought back, but it was mostly in unpublicized correspondence.

Senator Calder (Republican) had been quoted in the *Brooklyn Eagle* as saying, "This man [Kitchin] in discussing the war revenue bill last year said New York and New England had brought on the war and that he was going to make them pay for it." "If you are correctly quoted," wrote Kitchin, "I challenge you to name when or where or before whom I ever said or intimated such a thing. . . . Every one of my colleagues in the House, Republicans and Democrats, knows . . . that I am incapable of expressing or having such a thought. . . . Since the Ways and Means Committee first began to consider the revenue bill of last session, the press, especially the New York Press, has almost daily deliberately misrepresented and maligned me. I



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have taken no notice of its false and libelous charges. Friends in my state and district and my colleagues in the House, Republicans and Democrats alike, know there is no truth in them. They are fully aware, too, of the reasons and motives for the vicious attacks upon me by the press. But I cannot permit false charges, made or repeated publicly by a United States Senator, to go unnoticed.”<sup>70</sup>

Senator Calder’s indictment was quoted in the *Literary Digest*, and Kitchin made one last desperate effort, counting on the vaunted impartiality of the *Digest*, to get a public hearing. But to little avail. The *Digest* had “no intention of doing the slightest injustice”; but it could not consider questioning reprints from current publications.<sup>71</sup> Kitchin gave it up — so far as the press was concerned. For his own satisfaction he challenged one or two private gossips, publicly heard. One Henry Jessup, a New York lawyer, was spreading the story in the *Tribune* and the *Manufacturers Record* that Kitchin had said in Boston, “This is the North’s war and the North should pay for it.” Challenged, Mr. Jessup sought first to shunt the blame upon the *Manufacturers Record* for “trying to get up a scrap.” Pressed for his authority for the statement, he wrote Kitchin that he did not wish “to involve the indiscreet friend who first quoted your remarks in any trouble, and neither do you.” Was this bluff or blackmail? In the press it appeared, “Mr. Kitchin well knows . . . in what place and in whose li-

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brary he said it." This sounded dark. Kitchin demanded to know the place and the friend and the library, and told Jessup that "this infamous falsehood is of your own malicious making." The whole story, as might have been expected, proved a hoax. But the false impression created through the press went uncorrected.<sup>72</sup>

To one of his correspondents, Kitchin wrote: "If you had read the revenue act instead of the newspapers you could not have written me such a fool letter as yours of October 26."<sup>73</sup> To another who had been especially virulent he replied: "You ask me what kind of an American I am. I will not undertake to tell you, but will say this to you: If you ever meet me and admit in my presence that you are the author of the offensive, insulting letter of October 8th, which purports to come from you, I will show you in less time than a minute what kind of an American I am."<sup>74</sup>

On an envelope containing clippings from newspapers, attributing the current high prices to the excess profits tax, Kitchin made a pencil memorandum: "Soaring like vultures over the battlefields of France, over the training camps here and over the capitol at Washington, they have eyes only for some bit of carrion that they may glut their political malice, hatred, and treason on everything American."

Early in the controversy over the increase in second-class postage Kitchin charged the newspapers with

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maintaining a lobby, which some of them strongly denied. “It has been shown conclusively,” said the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, “that there is, and has been, no such lobby in Washington.”<sup>75</sup> Kitchin had in his possession at the time circulars of the Publishers’ Advisory Board, explaining its plan of campaign, already under way, to bring pressure to bear upon Congress to repeal the “iniquitous postal ‘rider.’ ”<sup>76</sup>

“The results are already apparent in Washington,” said C. J. Post, director of the P.A.B., admittedly the “General Staff” in this campaign to arouse the public and bring pressure upon Congressmen. It later appeared, in a tilt between Kitchin and Post in a hearing before the Ways and Means Committee, that publishers were preparing to “build fires” under Congressmen who favored the increased rates.<sup>77</sup>

Kitchin also had in his files a series of mimeographed sheets marked “Exclusive for your county — for publication on or after — ” They were transparent propaganda against the new postal rates, and most of them directly or indirectly reflected discredit upon Kitchin.\*

When the Congressional campaign of 1918 warmed up, the Republicans had a ready-made issue, which their Democratic compeers of the conservative press had

\* A number of papers whose circulation was limited to small areas endorsed the zone system; as did the National Editorial Association — composed mostly of the editors of such papers — at its meeting of June 3-10, 1918.

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helped them to popularize. "The business of the American people," said the *Sun*, "still remains to get rid of Kitchinism. When Mr. Wilson asks the American voters for another Kitchin Congress he asks them for national shipwreck." It was reiterated: Kitchin could not be defeated in his district, he could not be deposed from the leadership so long as the Democrats remained in power; hence the only way to be rid of his dominance in the House was to elect Republicans to Congress. Republican papers on all sides were not slow to take up the refrain. And it must have weighed heavily in the results.<sup>78</sup>

Of course there were many factors involved in the reversal of 1918. In the early days of the war Wilson, in seeking bi-partisan support of war measures, had declared that during the emergency "politics is adjourned." The Republicans, in the main, had supported the war measures of the Administration. Yet in the campaign of 1918, mainly on the ground that foreign nations might place unfortunate interpretations upon reverses to the party of the Administration, he asked the country to elect a Democratic Congress. The Republicans held that they had been double-crossed, and this opinion was shared by many normally Republican voters who had supported Wilson. Besides, the election came in the interval between the request for an armistice and the signing of it. Probably many were afraid



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that Wilson, with a Democratic Congress, might deal too gently with the Kaiser and his “Huns.” The propaganda had worked too well. Along with the zeal to hang the Kaiser and to end the war in Berlin, there had arisen a growing reaction against Wilsonian idealism, culminating in the crass materialism which characterized the nineteen-twenties. Furthermore, there were doubtless many who turned against an Administration which had gained popular support for having “kept us out of the war” and proceeded at once to put us into war. Moreover, the Democratic party had not been helped by the draft. Still another important influence was the widespread opposition to the taxes which the war had made necessary and which a Democratic Administration had been compelled to levy.

Such factors have, in the main, been given due weight by historians. But there was another — and a major one, — heretofore overlooked: the press campaign against Kitchin, with its reiterated slogan “The only way to be rid of Kitchinism is to elect Republicans to Congress!”

A Republican Congress was elected. “THE END OF KITCHINISM,” exulted the *Sun*. “Among the several causes that contributed to the great Republican success one of the most potent was the crass financial policy that has come to be known as Kitchinism.” Many other Republican organs similarly rejoiced and similarly in-

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terpreted the victory.<sup>79</sup> And even such normally Democratic papers as the New York *World* blamed the defeat of their party on "its Southern sectional leaders." The *World* then specified Kitchin. "In his personal, political, and sectional prejudices, too readily accepted by his associates, he and the Democratic party may find the reason why the new Congress will be Republican in both branches. . . . *The Democrats may live down the memory of their Kitchins in time but they will not shorten the period of disfavor by following them into the last ditches of obstinacy.*" Then appeared the chief animus of the editorial. It was alleged that Kitchin would hold up the entire revenue bill to force the *higher postal rates upon the press* under the zone system. "This vexatious and burdensome device was imposed upon the press and the people in the first place by Mr. Kitchin, not so much for revenue as for revenge. . . ." <sup>80</sup> The headline of one diatribe was "INTO THE DITCH WITH KITCHIN." <sup>81</sup>

Among Kitchin's December files of that year was a propaganda sheet put out by the Publishers' Advisory Board, featuring a reprint of the *World* editorial, distributed, it appeared from a postscript, to the press of the country. The organizations which it listed as participating in this enterprise were: — Periodical Publishers' Association; Association of the Religious Press; Allied Printing Trades Council; and Authors' League of America.

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Despite the attacks of selfish interests, Kitchin had the approval of numberless friends and fellow liberals. From eminent authorities in the social sciences, heads of liberal organizations, political associates, and lay friends — groups whose opinions he most esteemed — came messages of approval and encouragement. For example: J. Russell Smith, of the University of Pennsylvania; William E. Dodd, of the University of Chicago; J. M. Catell, ousted from Columbia on grounds of “pacifism” and economic heresy, not only commended Kitchin’s course but urged him to go farther in taxing profits and swollen fortunes.<sup>82</sup>

“I congratulate you on the equitable way you have distributed the burdens of war,” wrote W. J. Bryan.<sup>83</sup> The revenue bill “is the most just, humane, and progressive measure ever adopted by any nation in time of war,” wrote Secretary McAdoo.<sup>84</sup>

“Claude Kitchin is sincere and big and bold,” said the *Greensboro Record*.<sup>85</sup>

From Thomas D. Schall, a colleague from Minnesota, came the laconic message, “If I had but one word with which to describe you, I should describe you with the word COURAGE.”<sup>86</sup>

## CHAPTER VI

### "NO COMPROMISE WITH REACTION"

CAME the cold grey dawn of the morning after. The "dance of death" was ended. The "civilized" world had massacred some ten million people, maimed seven million others, wounded fifteen million, and destroyed about three hundred billion dollars of the accumulated capital of generations. The United States had contributed to these gory totals four million eight hundred thousand men under arms, of whom a hundred thousand were killed, immediately or by a lingering death, and a hundred and eighty thousand were maimed for life. It had spent over thirty-two billions dollars, about two-thirds of which remained as a burden upon taxpayers.

Verily, the country had been used as a cat's paw for a "civilization" that was not "saved" nor apparently worth the effort to save. Certainly the world was not "made safe for democracy"; nor was militarism banished from the earth. Thanks to our noble efforts, the Allies were able to inflict a Carthaginian peace upon their enemies, — a peace which was only a breeder of future wars. The League of Nations based upon such



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peace terms was a mockery from the start, as Kitchin had feared that it would be.

The dead were beyond recompense. Their bereaved dependents should be generously provided for, and the permanently wounded should be amply taken care of. This was Kitchin's position. A general bonus he opposed, fearing endless “raids upon the Treasury,” “a repetition of the Civil War pensions burden.” The huge debt should be paid as quickly as possible by the war generation. He fought till he died against every drive of the Tory reaction to relieve the rich of the burden and cast it on the poor and on future generations.

His fight, though not wholly futile, was against heavy odds. The reaction against Wilsonian idealism and realistic “Kitchinism” which had brought the political reversal of 1918, persisted through the glamorous business-man's paradise of the 'twenties. Aside from temporary gains for the forces of international amity, liberalism in America was scantily rewarded for its struggle; it had only the consolation that but for its efforts things might have been worse. It was the age of the millionaire Mellons, the Garys, the Fricks, the Insuls, and of their disciples, Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. So potent were the forces of Bourbonism, from 1919 onward, that political liberals were prone to compromise with reaction or else completely to embrace its cause. In Congress, Kitchin was apparently the sole survivor of the progressive Democ-

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racy who persistently withstood the trend. The handful of La Follette Progressives stood by their guns; liberally inclined Democrats sought refuge in halfway measures or else vied with the Republicans in doing homage to Baal. As minority leader, Kitchin, even after his physical collapse in 1920, strove, at times with some measure of success, to marshal the progressive forces in vigorous counter-attack. After his death, such liberalism as remained in the Democratic party was puny indeed.

In the winter of 1918-19 the conservative press rejoiced exceedingly that Kitchin would be out of power after March 4. One paper, editorializing on "KITCHIN'S FOLLY," recounted his opposition to war policies, adding, as crowning proof of his obstinacy, that he had "balked the Administration's plan for providing loans to our Allies after the return of peace."<sup>1</sup> So long as the war was in progress he had offered no opposition to such loans, though he had privately expressed misgivings regarding them. The emergency passed, he definitely opposed the granting of further loans, for he was aware of the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of their ever being paid. And he saw in the reaction the trend toward shifting the burden of taxation to the backs of the masses.

After the political overturn of 1918 and the consequent growth of the reactionary trend, the Wilson Ad-

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ministration tended to drift with the tide, a tendency accentuated after Wilson's physical collapse the following year. The Republican move to do away with the excess profits tax was by no means solidly opposed by the Democrats, and the move to lower the rates on the upper brackets of the income surtaxes had the blessing of the Administration. In December, 1920, Secretary Houston, then of the Treasury Department, himself proposed the lowering of the tax on incomes in the upper brackets and an actual increase of the tax on those in the lower income groups.<sup>2</sup> What Wilson would have said if he had been competent to interpret the situation, no one can say. Wilson was a sick man, and the country was virtually without a President.

What Kitchin said is on record: “The whole intent and policy of the Secretary's recommendations are to relieve of a billion and a half or two billion dollars of taxes annually the corporate interests and millionaires, who for the past four years have plundered and profiteered upon the people to the extent of billions of dollars and to place the burden upon the backs of the public; that is, the victims of such plunderers and profiteers.”<sup>3</sup>

Kitchin was sorely distressed that his party showed a tendency to drift with the tide. There was not room in the country, he said, for two reactionary parties, certainly not the two major ones; and the Democrats surely need have no hopes of competing with the Re-

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publicans for reactionary support. Sensing that Democrats were tempted to yield to the powerful propaganda for repealing the excess-profits tax — “the worst of nuisance taxes,” according to the Tory press — Kitchen wrote to “Bill” Collier: \*

“Our Democrats ought to stand by the excess profits tax on the profiteers who accumulated more than forty billion dollars during the war out of our Government and the people, while the boys were fighting and dying in France, in addition to their normal profits prior to the war, and are still profiteering. . . . [They] should not be relieved of taxes as long as there is a single disabled soldier, or a single widow or orphan of a dead soldier is in need.” He admitted that some inequalities and injustices in the tax should be relieved by amendment, but otherwise *stet!*

He also wrote to Finis Garrett, acting minority leader, — for Kitchen’s stroke had come in the meantime and it was not certain whether he would ever be able to assume the leadership again: — “I suggest that you see Rayburn and have a caucus called so that Democrats may line up if possible against the tax program of the Republicans, especially against the repeal of the excess-profits tax, . . . I am confident that I have studied and analyzed in detail more than any other member of the Ways and Means Committee, Democrat or Republican, the income and excess-profits taxes and the statistics contained in the reports of the Commis-



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sioner of Internal Revenue since we first had an excess-profits tax law. I am thoroughly convinced that if the Democrats join with the Republicans in repealing the excess-profits tax and substituting the 15 per cent corporation tax, and in reducing the high surtaxes on incomes of the millionaires and multimillionaires, thus vindicating and justifying the Republican program, it will prove to be a most fatal mistake both for the Democratic party and for every individual Democratic Member voting for it.” The proposed plan, he said, would “make the burdens of those most able to bear them lighter and the burdens of those least able to bear them heavier, which is violative of every fundamental principle of the Democratic party.” <sup>5</sup>

And to what extent would corporate wealth profit if the tax were removed? “The Steel Corporation made over \$500,000,000 net profits in 1918 and had a net income of \$2,554,000,000 and, while paying only \$203,000,000 income tax, paid \$848,000,000 excess-profits taxes, while the over 300,000 corporations making from nothing up to a \$100,000 net income yearly paid only \$285,000,000 excess-profits taxes. One thousand and twenty-six corporations, with a net income of \$4,255,000,000, more than one-half of the total corporate net income of all the 317,559 corporations, while paying only \$333,000,000 income tax paid \$1,442,000,000 of excess-profits tax; that is, paid . . . nearly two-thirds of the entire excess-profits tax. . . . At a glance

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one will see that the proposed proposition is one to relieve a few hundred of the biggest profiteering corporations in the United States and not, as Mr. Mellon says, 'to unclog business. . . .'

"It further shows the conscienceless and exorbitant profits on invested capital; they made from 20 to over 50 per cent. . . ." He then explained that the profits would not be so large thereafter, hence the yield of the tax would not be so great, but the principle remained the same.

The July, 1921, report of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue had shown that the corporations had profited to the extent of forty-seven billion dollars between January, 1916, and July, 1921; meanwhile, more farmers had given in personal returns for relatively small incomes than any other class in the country. Why were the Republicans "and perhaps some Democrats" more concerned about the former than the latter? <sup>6</sup>

This letter was printed with a "Confidential" stamp and apparently circulated among the Democratic members of the Ways and Means Committee.

Unfortunately for his cause, Kitchin was sending such communications, in the main, from a sick-bed. Only intermittently was he able to get to his office after his stroke in April, 1920; but, while lying partially paralyzed and physically inactive, he kept up the fight. For his mind was as clear as ever. Even when scarcely able



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to move in his bed, he dictated to his stenographers.

And his influence with his Democratic colleagues, even upon those who were constrained to desert his policies and drift with the tide, is attested by the fact that they would not choose a permanent minority leader until they knew whether he would be able to return.

His collapse had come at the close of an impassioned speech. Representative Oldfield described the incident as follows: “When Mr. Kitchin became ill, Mr. Doughton and myself were sitting behind the seat in which he always sat. When he finished his speech on that fatal day, I saw there was something wrong with him. He could not hold his pencil in his hand and he could not hold his papers. . . . I made some joking remark . . . and then when I looked in his eyes I knew there was something seriously wrong. Therefore I took him by the arm and said, ‘Claude, we must go to your office; you are ill.’ Then Doughton came along and we took him to his office, put him on the couch, and within five or ten minutes I was very much alarmed and was very fearful that he would not get home that evening alive.”

“To show how devoted the colored messenger was to Mr. Kitchin, — I do not think it would be amiss to say this, because it is simply an illustration of the way in which every one was devoted to him, and such devotion was never misplaced — that Harry told me one day, after Mr. Kitchin began to improve, that he knew he was going to get well. I said, ‘Why, Harry?’ And he

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said, 'I has been praying for him every night since he got sick.' The devotion of that man was shown for weeks when Mr. Kitchin lay at the point of death. One could always find Harry on the back porch of Mr. Kitchin's residence, and when you would ask, 'Harry, what are you doing there?' his reply would be, 'I am here because I thought maybe Mrs. Kitchin might need me during the night.' That was the devotion shown by all his friends." '

Harry's reaction was typical of his race — another illustration of the fact that Southerners, if less friendly toward Negroes in the abstract, are generally more so in the concrete. Every Negro employee on Capitol Hill loved Kitchin. Every Negro around Scotland Neck worshipped him, as the following letter will illustrate.

"This letter is from your old nigger Jonas. This leaves me and family well and I hope this will find you and all well. I saw in the paper where your health was not so good. I saw also your photo and I cut it out so that I could take it home. I wrote to Mr. A. P. Kitchin and he sent me your address. I would like to see you one more time before I die. Your faithful nigger, Jonas Smith." \*

A somewhat similar feeling of loyalty and confidence characterized Kitchin's Democratic colleagues, as attested by the following letter from C. H. England, his secretary, written while Kitchin was in bed:

"All Democratic members realize and the big ma-



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jority appreciate what you mean to the Democratic side, how absolutely lacking is any other member . . . to take your place. . . . I myself, who for years have seen your efforts and accomplishments, did not have the tiniest idea of your influence and control on the Democratic side until I saw the results of your absence.” •

Having temporarily recovered his health, by April, 1921, to the point of being apparently able to resume his duties in Congress, he was chosen without opposition as minority leader, a position which he retained until his death in May, 1923. The day following his election to the leadership, he was made the Democratic nominee for the Speakership. It was an empty honor, to be sure, for the Republicans were in the majority; but when the nomination was made, all the Democrats and most of the Republicans rose to their feet and cheered.<sup>10</sup>

“It is a great satisfaction,” wrote Bryan, “to learn that you are sufficiently improved to accept the deserved honor of minority leadership. We shall need your wisdom and courage. . . .”<sup>11</sup>

Kitchin continued his fight, not only against the lowering of the assessment on the upper brackets of the income tax and the repeal of the excess-profits tax, but also against the boosting of the tariff on imports, against compulsory military training, interferences with civil liberty, and all other reactionary trends.

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The tariff was the worst of all regressive measures. It exacted billions from consumers, not only for the government but many times more for private interests. Besides, it had become a more deleterious policy than ever before, in view of our new status in world trade and finance. So long as we remained, as we did before the war, a debtor nation, we could limit imports without curtailing exports to the same degree; but now that we had become the greatest of all creditor nations, we could no longer export more in value than we imported — not as much, in fact, if the debts were to be paid.<sup>12</sup>

*Temporarily* we could do this, to be sure, by sending good money after bad. With fresh loans, foreign countries could absorb enough of our surplus to keep our industries prosperous for a while. But a reckoning would come. And who would be left to hold the bag? Not those who had profited most by the near-sighted policy.

Yet such was the Republican policy of the 'twenties. It not only had the defect that the foreigners could not possibly repay us in gold and that our tariffs would not permit them to pay us in goods, but it failed to meet the needs of our farmers. The recovery and expansion of agriculture abroad left our producers of agricultural staples without adequate markets. Prices of their products fell greatly and remained far out of line with those of industry. The curtailment of their purchasing power

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inevitably was felt in the markets. Such policies were among the major causes of the crisis of 1929 and the depression of the 'thirties.

Aware of the nearsightedness of these policies, Kitchin fought them to the last, whether on the floor or from a sick-bed. But to no avail; the forces of reaction were too overwhelming.

“It is simply monstrous,” he wrote Oldfield, “for a Democrat, who claims to be from the people and with the people, to join with the Republicans, who are simply the tools of the special interests, to relieve these millionaiored corporate plunderers of taxes and to put them elsewhere upon the people, especially when the Republican House has just passed a tariff which enables these same corporations to plunder the people an extra \$5,000,000,000 a year. Shall we Democrats vote to permit them to continue to profiteer upon the people and the Government in times of peace without let or hindrance? This tax is the only conceivable check on their avarice. . . . I am afraid our Democrats are being intimidated by the propaganda of special interests. If we surrender to it we might as well not make a fight in 1924. We will have no issue with the Republicans. . . .”<sup>13</sup>

Kitchin's greatest disappointment lay in the fact that he could not get his Democratic colleagues to stand by him in the matter. In all the voluminous papers which he left, the plaintive note appears nowhere more em-

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phatically than in his correspondence in August, 1921, when he was striving to get the Democrats of the Ways and Means Committee united upon a vigorous minority report in opposition to the Republican policies in connection with the first revenue measure of the Harding Administration.

Apparently if he could have been present at the time the force of his personality would have prevailed. But in his absence Garner, who was inclined to drift with the tide, was able to induce a large element of the Democrats on the committee virtually to accept the Republican position. He and his following wanted the Democrats to agree to the repeal of the excess profits tax and at least to compromise with the Republicans on the tariff and the lowering of rates on the upper brackets of the income tax. In this position he was seconded by Crisp of Georgia. England wrote Kitchin that Crisp was "a noticeable rival of Garner's in rascality. . . . Never let him fool you. . . . He is a hypocrite." On the other hand, he said that Finis Garrett (of Tennessee) is "honorable . . . and wants to carry out your wishes." <sup>14</sup>

In the end, the minority report which Kitchin had written went in with only his signature. This was done as a compromise. Neither side had a majority among the Democrats of the committee, for there was a wavering middle group, evidently wanting to follow Kitchin but fearing to do so in the face of an apparently power-



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ful reactionary trend among the electorate. Those who were more or less inclined to follow Garner were Black, Byrnes of South Carolina, Byrnes of Tennessee, Fields and Garrett of Texas, Jones, Larson, and Lee of Georgia. Those inclined to follow Kitchin were Collier, Collins, Davis, Dupré, Finis Garrett of Tennessee, Griffin, Oldfield, Sisson, Steagall, and Stedman; but apparently some of these belonged to that middle group who preferred not to take a public stand in the matter.<sup>16</sup>

Oldfield wrote to Kitchin that the reason why the report was permitted to go in with only Kitchin's signature was that he, himself, and several others who sided with Kitchin thought it better that it should be handled in that way so as not to reveal the fact that the Democrats of the committee were badly divided.<sup>16</sup>

Kitchin's fight was as futile as it was brave. Mellonism was triumphant. Taxes on the rich were greatly lowered — on the grounds that surplus capital in the hands of the rich would be reinvested in business enterprises, thus stimulating prosperity. It turned out that entirely too much was so invested, and this was another contributory cause of the inflation of the late 'twenties and the tragic depression that followed in the 'thirties. If Kitchin had had his way doubtless the business cycle would still have operated; but, in all probability, the boom would not have gone so high nor the consequent depression so low, hence the disastrous consequences would have been greatly lessened. What is more, the

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depression would not have caught us with half the war debt still unpaid.

In the autumn of 1921 Kitchin's malady grew worse. He was stricken with vertigo while in the Washington post office and had to be taken home. Intermittently thereafter he suffered from extreme dizziness and from severe headaches. He went to the Capitol regularly at times, irregularly at others, and occasionally was confined at home for weeks. He was under the treatment of numerous physicians and surgeons. He underwent a serious head operation. But all to no avail. No one seemed to understand his trouble.

And yet, through it all, he continued to function as minority leader until within a month of his death — nominally to the end. From all sides came the commentary, "His mind was as clear as ever and his courage untrammelled."

In May, 1923, he was taken to a hospital in Wilson, North Carolina, where he died on the thirty-first.

"The outstanding fact about Mr. Kitchin," said Mr. Daniels, "was his sincerity. He never dissembled. You always knew where to find him. He was the essence of frankness."<sup>17</sup>

"He was as much a casualty of the war," said the Scotland Neck *Commonwealth*, "as any soldier killed on the battlefields of France."<sup>18</sup>



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### CHAPTER I

NOTE: The papers of Claude Kitchin are in the library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Although the collection is scant for the years prior to 1915, it is exceptionally complete from that year to his death in 1923. It contains about one hundred thousand letters and telegrams and numerous miscellaneous documents. Arranged chronologically, it is easily accessible to the student. All manuscript material cited here with no other indication as to its whereabouts is in this collection. Articles cited in newspapers other than the Eastern Metropolitan dailies, and Greensboro, N.C., *Daily News*, are in most cases to be found in clippings among the Kitchin papers. The same is true with references to such rare magazines as the *National Monthly*.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Lena Smith, "The Honorable Claude Kitchin, M.C." A manuscript sketch, largely genealogical and appreciative, by a lifelong acquaintance of Kitchin. Confirmed by his brother, Dr. Thurman Kitchin, in a letter to the writer, November 25, 1935. Both have been placed in the Kitchin collection.

<sup>2</sup> John Temple Graves, "A Democratic Rupert," *Cosmopolitan*, April, 1914; *Boston Globe*, Mar. 7, 1915; *Los Angeles Times*, Mar. 7, 1915; confirmed by Dr. Thurman Kitchin, *op. cit.*

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- <sup>3</sup> W. C. Allen, *A History of Halifax County*, Introduction, Chaps. xix, xx.
- <sup>4</sup> Allen, *op. cit.*, Chaps. xxviii, xxix.
- <sup>5</sup> A. M. Arnett, *The Populist Movement in Georgia*, Chaps. i, ii; J. D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt*, Chaps. ii, iii; B. B. Kendrick and A. M. Arnett, *The South Looks at Its Past*, Chap. iii.
- <sup>6</sup> Dr. Thurman Kitchin to the author, February 21, 1936 (in Kitchin collection); Representative Thomas M. Reilly, "Honorable Claude Kitchin," *National Monthly*, May, 1915; John Temple Graves, *loc. cit.*, *supra*.
- <sup>7</sup> Kendrick and Arnett, *op. cit.*, Chap. iii.
- <sup>8</sup> Allen, *op. cit.*, Chaps. xxviii, xxix.
- <sup>9</sup> R. D. W. Connor, *North Carolina; the Rehabilitation of an Ancient Commonwealth*, Vol. II, Chap. xii; Arnett, *loc. cit.*; Hicks, *loc. cit.*
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> Connor, *loc. cit.*; Hicks, Chaps. v, vi; Arnett, Chap. iii.
- <sup>12</sup> Hicks, Chap. vii-ix; Connor, *loc. cit.*
- <sup>13</sup> Connor, Chap. xlii; J. G. de R. Hamilton, *History of North Carolina*, by Connor, Boyd and Hamilton, Vol. III, Chap. xiii.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, especially Hamilton, p. 258.
- <sup>15</sup> Miss Lena Smith, *op. cit.*; Dr. Thurman Kitchin to the author, Nov. 25, 1935, Feb. 21, 1936 (in Kitchin collection).
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* The story of the courtship and early married life was told to the author by Mrs. Kitchin.
- <sup>17</sup> MS. in Kitchin collection.
- <sup>18</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LXV, p. 11147. Salient points confirmed by Dr. Kitchin, Nov. 25, 1935, *op. cit.*
- <sup>19</sup> Connor, Chaps. xiii, xiv; Hamilton, Chap. xiii; Connor and Poe, *Life and Speeches of Charles B. Aycock*.



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- <sup>20</sup> Raleigh *News and Observer*, May 25, 26, 1900.
- <sup>21</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LXV, p. 757.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 756; also pp. 755, 757, 765, 767.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 754, 755, 758.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 754; also pp. 756, 759, 762, 763, 764. See also Graves, *op. cit.*, *infra*.
- <sup>25</sup> John Temple Graves, "A Democratic Rupert," *Cosmopolitan*, April, 1914. This was also told to the author by Representative J. W. Collier.
- <sup>26</sup> Raleigh *News and Observer*, June 1, 1923. See also *Congressional Record*, Vol. LXV, pp. 756-757.
- <sup>27</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. XLV, p. 3159.
- <sup>28</sup> James W. Dunbar to Kitchin, July 1, 1922.
- <sup>29</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LXV, p. 765.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 755-756.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11147; also pp. 759, 762; John Temple Graves, *op. cit.*; Thomas L. Reilly, "The New Democratic Leader," *National Monthly*, May, 1914.
- <sup>32</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LXV, p. 764.
- <sup>33</sup> Told to the author by Mr. Collier, June, 1931.
- <sup>34</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LXV, p. 756.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 5393-5398, 5454.
- <sup>36</sup> Washington *Evening Star*, Sept. 30, 1904.
- <sup>37</sup> Connor, *op. cit.*, Chap. xliii.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. XLIV, pp. 583-601.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 586.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 484-485.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. XLVI, p. 2515.
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. XLVIII, pp. 4121-4130.
- <sup>44</sup> Connor, *op. cit.*, xliii.
- <sup>45</sup> New York *Times*, Feb. 10, Sept. 13, Dec. 20, 1914;

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<sup>46</sup> Kitchin to Francis Burton Harrison, Oct. 18, 1915; to H. F. Lease, Oct. 27, 1915; to Charles L. Coon, Nov. 11, 1915. See also *New York Times*, Feb. 5, 1915; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Feb. 13, 1915; *Hartford Courant*, Feb. 22, 1915.

<sup>47</sup> See Chap. II, *infra*.

<sup>48</sup> Greensboro, N. C., *Daily News*, Oct. 12, 1913.

<sup>49</sup> Edl. in the *Raleigh News and Observer*, June 1, 1923, written by Josephus Daniels. (See letters from Mr. Daniels to the author, July 15, Aug. 3, 1936 — in Kitchin collection.)

<sup>50</sup> Jos. P. Tumulty, *Woodrow Wilson As I Knew Him*, pp. 169-70.

<sup>51</sup> J. T. Graves, "A Democratic Rupert," *Cosmopolitan*, Apr., 1914.

<sup>52</sup> *New York Times*, Dec. 20, 21, 1914.

## CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup> The quotation is from Kitchin's speech against the war resolution, quoted in full in Chapter iv, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, Nov. 21, 1915.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in a letter from Mr. Daniels to the author, Sep. 10, 1936 (in Kitchin collection).

<sup>4</sup> Kitchin to J. W. McAnally, Aug. 30; to John E. Tucker, Sep. 1, 1915.

<sup>5</sup> Greensboro, N. C., *Daily News*, Aug. 27; Kitchin to Secretary Daniels, Aug. 30; to H. E. C. Bryant, Sep. 1; to E. W. Saunders, Sep. 1; to W. J. Bryan, Sep. 10, 1915.

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<sup>6</sup> Kitchin to E. W. Saunders, Sep. 1, 1915. Of similar import to Daniels, Bryant and Bryan, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Published in press, Nov. 20, and in *Congressional Record*, Dec. 14, 1915. See also Kitchin to F. L. Foust, Jan. 31, 1916.

<sup>9</sup> To J. J. Russell, Oct. 30; also to B. J. Hall, Nov. 13, 1915.

<sup>10</sup> To J. J. Russell, *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> Kitchin to Charles L. Coon, Nov. 3, 1915.

<sup>12</sup> Daily press, Oct. 16, 1915.

<sup>13</sup> New York *Evening Post*, Nov. 18, 1915.

<sup>14</sup> Kitchin to Thomas Newland, Nov. 1; to A. L. and S. E. Nicholson, Nov. 27; to B. F. Hall, Nov. 3; to A. L. Brooks, Nov. 1; and to Clyde Tavener, Nov. 5, 1915.

<sup>15</sup> Kitchin to B. F. Hall, Nov. 3; New York *World*, Nov. 28, 1915.

<sup>16</sup> New York *Evening Post*, Nov. 18, 1915.

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<sup>18</sup> Clippings, in the Kitchin collection.

<sup>19</sup> Bryan to Kitchin, Sep. 5; also Oct. 14, 1915.

<sup>20</sup> Saunders to Kitchin, Aug. 28, 1915.

<sup>21</sup> Webb to Kitchin, Sep. 2, 1915.

<sup>22</sup> Scattergood to Kitchin, Sep. 2, 1915.

<sup>23</sup> Jordan to Kitchin, Feb. 8, 1916.

<sup>24</sup> Clark to Kitchin, Nov. 23, 1915.

<sup>25</sup> Mussey to Kitchin, Dec. 20, 1915.

<sup>26</sup> Villard to Kitchin, Nov. 17, 1915.

<sup>27</sup> Alexander to Kitchin, Nov. 24, 1915.

<sup>28</sup> An Asheville lawyer to Kitchin, Nov. 20, 1915.

<sup>29</sup> Kitchin to Bryan, Oct. 20, 1915.



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- <sup>31</sup> Kitchin to Victor Murdock, Oct. 18, 1915.
- <sup>32</sup> Kitchin to Page, Nov. 18, 1915.
- <sup>33</sup> Kitchin to Bryan, Oct. 14, 1915.
- <sup>34</sup> Bailey to Kitchin, Oct. 5, 1915.
- <sup>35</sup> To Bruce Craven and to J. D. McNell, Dec. 11, 1915.
- <sup>36</sup> Hay to Kitchin, Oct. 4, 1915.
- <sup>37</sup> Howard to Kitchin, Nov. 18, 1915.
- <sup>38</sup> N. C. dailies, Nov. 20, 1915. Cf. *New York Tribune*, Nov. 9, 1915.
- <sup>39</sup> Kitchin to James Hay, Oct. 8; to W. W. Bailey, Oct. 14; to S. A. Witherspoon, Oct. 6, 1915.
- <sup>40</sup> Kitchin to H. F. Lease, Oct. 27; similarly to S. E. Nicholson, Nov. 27, 1915; and to S. E. Millcaps, Jan. 4, 1916.
- <sup>41</sup> Kitchin wrote E. W. Saunders, also Charles Crisp, Sep. 1, that he had no word from the President.
- <sup>42</sup> Kitchin to Professor Charles L. Coon, Nov. 11, 1915.
- <sup>43</sup> Kitchin to Isaac R. Sherwood, Nov. 12, 1915.
- <sup>44</sup> Not until the armed-ship controversy of February, 1916, does any evidence appear that Kitchin remotely suspected that Wilson was desirous of war.
- <sup>45</sup> *Reidsville Review*, Nov. 8, 1915 (clipping in Kitchin collection).
- <sup>46</sup> James M. Norfleet to Kitchin, Nov. 20, 1915.
- <sup>47</sup> L. Ames Brown to Kitchin, Oct. 21, 1915.
- <sup>48</sup> Thomas M. Reilly in *National Monthly*, May, 1914; John Temple Graves in *Cosmopolitan*, April, 1914; *Raleigh News and Observer*, Feb. 5, 1915; *Los Angeles Times*, Mar. 7, 1915; *Washington Courier*, Nov. 20, 1915.
- <sup>49</sup> *New York Evening Sun*, Nov. 24, 1915.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, Dec. 4, 1915.



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<sup>52</sup> *New York Times*, Nov. 16, 1915.

<sup>53</sup> *Literary Digest*, Dec. 4, 1915.

<sup>54</sup> *Atlanta Journal*, Mar. 8, 1916 (edl.). See also *New York World*, Feb. 14, 1916.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted by Kitchin in letter to N. C. press, *op. cit.*

<sup>56</sup> *New York Herald*, Nov. 10, 1915.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 13, 1915.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 14, 1915.

<sup>59</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 15, 1915.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, Dec. 6, 1915.

<sup>62</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>63</sup> Kitchin to John D. Wilson, Nov. 19, 1915.

<sup>64</sup> Charles L. Coon to Kitchin, Nov. 23, 1915.

<sup>65</sup> Daily press, June 6–10, 1916. Concord, N. C., *Tribune*, June 10, 1916 (clipping in Kitchin collection).

<sup>66</sup> Open letter to North Carolina press, published Nov. 20, 1915.

<sup>67</sup> *New York Times*, Nov. 27, 28, Dec. 26, 27, 1915.

<sup>68</sup> Mencken to Kitchin, Dec. 28, 1915.

<sup>69</sup> Identification in this case is withheld, for obvious reasons. Unfortunately the letter was not dated, but it appeared in Kitchin's December files.

<sup>70</sup> *New York Times*, Nov. 27, 28, Dec. 26, 27, 1915.

<sup>71</sup> *New York Times*, Nov. 17, 18. L. A. Brown to Kitchin, Nov. 3, 1915. Brown was told by Tumulty, he said, that it was all a lie.

<sup>72</sup> *New York Evening Sun*, Nov. 24, 1915.

<sup>73</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LXV, p. 755.

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- <sup>75</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, April, 1914.
- <sup>76</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb. 11, 1915.
- <sup>77</sup> Webb to the author, Nov. 28, 1935 (in Kitchin collection).
- <sup>78</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LXV, p. 765.
- <sup>79</sup> Gardner to Kitchin, Sep. 8, 1916.
- <sup>80</sup> Kitchin to Bryan, Dec. 13, 1915.
- <sup>81</sup> *New York World*, Oct. 7, 1917; Kitchin to Bryan, Jan. 31, 1916.
- <sup>82</sup> Kitchin to E. H. Vallandigham, Feb. 8, 1916.
- <sup>83</sup> Kitchin to Jas. McGuire, Feb. 23, 1916.
- <sup>84</sup> Defeated in the Committee on Military Affairs — Kitchin to E. L. Armsby, Feb. 16, 1916. See also Kitchin to H. S. Overman, Mar. 13, and to H. Q. Alexander, Mar. 18, 1916.
- <sup>85</sup> *New York Times*, Feb. 12; *New York Herald*, Feb. 13, 1916.
- <sup>86</sup> *New York Times*, Feb. 13, 1916.
- <sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 14, 1916.
- <sup>88</sup> *Greensboro Daily News*, Feb. 15. Cf. *New York Times*, Feb. 14. Kitchin to A. McDowell, Feb. 14, refers to the rumor as "tommyrot and nonsense."
- <sup>89</sup> *New York World*, Feb. 14, 1916.
- <sup>90</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LIII, pp. 4697, 4728, 4731; *New York Times*, Mar. 24, 1916.
- <sup>91</sup> Kitchin to H. Q. Alexander, Mar. 18; to F. W. Kelsey, June 3, 1916.
- <sup>92</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LIII, pp. 5564-5587.
- <sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 6332-6377; *New York Times*, Apr. 19, 1916.
- <sup>94</sup> The conference report, elaborating the measure: *Congressional Record*, Vol. LIII, pp. 8375-8395.

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- <sup>95</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LIII, 95–100.
- <sup>96</sup> *Greensboro Daily News*, Jan. 27, 1916.
- <sup>97</sup> Kitchin to H. F. Jones, Feb. 21, 1916.
- <sup>98</sup> *New York Times*, Apr. 19, 1916.
- <sup>99</sup> Mr. Daniels to the author, Sep. 10, 1936 (in Kitchin collection).
- <sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>101</sup> *New York Times*, May 19, 1916.
- <sup>102</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LIII, p. 12697.
- <sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix, p. 1314.
- <sup>104</sup> Kitchin to F. W. Kelsey, June 3, 1916.
- <sup>105</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LIII, pp. 12668–12669.
- <sup>106</sup> Mr. Daniels to the author, Sep. 10, 1936.
- <sup>107</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LIII, pp. 12697–8.
- <sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12700; *New York Times*, Aug. 16, 1916.
- <sup>109</sup> Kitchin to John Walso, Aug. 19, 1916.
- <sup>110</sup> *New York Times*, May 11, 1917.
- <sup>111</sup> Kitchin to W. B. Harker, Aug. 4, 1916.
- <sup>112</sup> Kitchin to R. R. Bowker, Apr. 15, 1916; *International News Service*, Jan. 28; *New York Times*, Dec. 9, 1915, Feb. 18, May 30, 1916.
- <sup>113</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LIV, p. 2130.
- <sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2199.
- <sup>115</sup> *Literary Digest*, Feb. 10, 1917.
- <sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>1</sup> Meriden, Conn., *Morning Record*, July 26, 1915 (clipping, in Kitchin collection).

<sup>2</sup> Philadelphia *Inquirer*, Feb. 13, 1915; also Hartford *Courant*, Feb. 22; *Christian Science Monitor*, February 11, 1915. (Clippings, *ibid.*)

<sup>3</sup> Charles A. Beard, *The Devil Theory of War*.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Seymour, ed., *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol. I, p. 296.

<sup>5</sup> R. S. Baker and W. E. Dodd, *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 158.

<sup>6</sup> L. M. Hacker and B. B. Kendrick, *The United States since 1865*, p. 450.

<sup>7</sup> Viscount Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, Vol. II, p. 101.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>9</sup> *War Memoirs of Robert Lansing*, pp. 19-21.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Seymour, ed., *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol. I, p. 275, *n*.

<sup>11</sup> Good accounts of the purposes and technique of the propaganda are: Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in War-Time*; Irene C. Willis, *England's Holy War*; H. D. Laswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War*; and G. S. Vierick, *Spreading Germs of Hate*.

<sup>12</sup> Harry Elmer Barnes, *The Genesis of the World War*, based on the new evidence, finds little to choose as to the relative guilt of the two sides, but is inclined to hold Russia and France somewhat more blameworthy than Germany and Austria; Sidney B. Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, balances the evidence and concludes that responsibility was about equally divided; Bernadotte Schmidt, *The Coming of the War*, also finds responsibility divided but holds Germany



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and Austria somewhat more responsible for the outbreak. No reputable historian any longer holds either side wholly or even preponderantly to blame.

<sup>13</sup> Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in War-Time*, Chaps. vi, viii, xiii.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Chaps. xi, xvii.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, Chap. xxviii.

<sup>16</sup> Chas. A. Beard, "The Devil Theory of War," pp. 32ff. (An analysis of the evidence adduced by the Nye Committee.)

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, *passim*. The colloquy between McCumber and Wilson appears on pp. 101, 102. The fact that Bryan was persuaded to consent tacitly to credits was a later discovery of Dr. Beard's; see the *New Republic*, June 17, 1936.

<sup>18</sup> Foreign Trade Adviser in the Department of State to Kitchin, May 28, 1915. See also E. V. Webb & Co. to Kitchin, May 1; John A. Barringer to Kitchin, Aug. 27; Lohse, Gersdts & Co., Rotterdam, to Kitchin, Apr. 16; correspondence between Kitchin, Lansing, and Fleming (Foreign Trade Adviser), April-May, 1915.

<sup>19</sup> Kitchin to John A. Barringer, Sep. 1, 1915.

<sup>20</sup> Greensboro *Daily News*, Aug. 27, 1915.

<sup>21</sup> E. Y. Webb to Kitchin, Sep. 2, 1915.

<sup>22</sup> Kitchin to Webb, Sep. 6, 1915.

<sup>23</sup> Greensboro *Daily News*, fall and winter of 1915-6; esp. Sep. 11, 16, Oct. 21.

<sup>24</sup> *Literary Digest*, Feb. 20, 1915.

<sup>25</sup> *New York Times*, Feb. 16, 1915.

<sup>26</sup> Baker and Dodd, *Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 280-283.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 284-286.

<sup>28</sup> *Literary Digest*, May 15, 22, 1915.

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Charles Seymour, *American Diplomacy during the World War*, p. 68. See also pp. 48-50, 91-92, 96.

<sup>32</sup> Greensboro *Daily News*, June 8, 1915.

<sup>33</sup> Seymour, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

<sup>34</sup> J. S. Bassett, *Our War with Germany*, p. 55; Seymour, *loc. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> Seymour, *loc. cit.*; Walter Millis, *Road to War*, pp. 262-265; Hartley Grattan, *Why We Fought*, pp. 327-328.

<sup>36</sup> Millis, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

<sup>37</sup> Seymour, p. 112.

<sup>38</sup> John Bassett Moore to the author, Feb. 2, 10, 1936 (in Kitchin collection).

<sup>39</sup> New York *Evening Post*, Mar. 7, 1916.

<sup>40</sup> J. B. Moore to the author, *op. cit.* Also pamphlet by Professor Moore, "Pending 'Neutrality' Proposals," February, 1936.

<sup>41</sup> Seymour, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>42</sup> W. J. Bryan in *The Commoner*, Mar., 1916; New York *World*.

<sup>43</sup> New York *Evening Post*, Feb. 24, 1916. Similar accounts by Parker Anderson in Greensboro *Daily News*, Feb. 22, 23.

<sup>44</sup> New York *Times*, Feb. 22, 23, 1916.

<sup>45</sup> Kitchin to Jos. E. Pogue and to D. T. Wade, Feb. 28, 1916; Greensboro *Daily News*, Feb. 22-26; New York *Evening Post*, Feb. 22, 24, Mar. 2; New York *Evening Sun*, Feb. 22, 24, Mar. 2.

<sup>46</sup> Kitchin to Capt. J. J. Laughinghouse, Mar. 3; to Capt. J. B. Lloyd, to William A. Lucas, and to O. L. Ipoeh, Mar. 4.

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See also David Lawrence in New York *Evening Post*, Feb. 21-26, 1916.

<sup>47</sup> Kitchin to M. L. Kesler, Feb. 26; to J. S. McRae, to D. T. Ward, to Jos. E. Pogue, Feb. 28, 1916.

<sup>48</sup> New York *Evening Sun*, Mar. 1, 2; *World*, Mar. 3; *Evening Post*, Mar. 2, 1916.

<sup>49</sup> New York *Evening Post*, Mar. 2, 1916.

<sup>50</sup> Kitchin to Rev. Chas. H. Nash, Feb. 29, 1916. His position was stated in the Greensboro *Daily News*, Feb. 25, 29.

<sup>51</sup> Kitchin to Jos. E. Pogue, Feb. 28, 1916.

<sup>52</sup> Kitchin to J. J. Laughinghouse, Mar. 3, 1916.

<sup>53</sup> Kitchin to Rev. C. Lauterback, Feb. 24, 1916.

<sup>54</sup> Daily press, Feb. 23-Mar. 3, 1916.

<sup>55</sup> New York *Evening Sun*, Mar. 1, 1916.

<sup>56</sup> New York *Evening Post*, Mar. 2, 1916.

<sup>57</sup> New York *World*, Feb. 24, 1916.

<sup>58</sup> Kitchin to Thos. Newlands, Nov. 1, and to A. L. Brooks, Nov. 3, 1915.

<sup>59</sup> New York *Herald*, Mar. 1, 1916.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 3, 1916.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 2, 3.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 2.

<sup>63</sup> New York *World*, Feb. 28, 1916.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 2.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 3.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 2.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 5, 6.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 5.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 6.

<sup>70</sup> New York *Times*, Feb. 25, 1916.

<sup>71</sup> New York *Evening Sun*, Feb. 24, Mar. 3.

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- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 1.
- <sup>73</sup> Roanoke *Times*, Mar. 5, 1916. (Clipping, in Kitchin collection.)
- <sup>74</sup> Atlanta *Journal*, Mar. 8, 1916 (clipping, *ibid.*).
- <sup>75</sup> Kitchin to Richard J. White, Mar. 9, 1916.
- <sup>76</sup> Greensboro *Daily News*, Feb. 25, 1916.
- <sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 29, 1916.
- <sup>78</sup> Clarence Poe to Kitchin, Mar. 1, 1916.
- <sup>79</sup> H. Q. Alexander to Kitchin, Mar. 1, 9.
- <sup>80</sup> O. M. Stafford to Kitchin, Feb. 25.
- <sup>81</sup> George Fort Milton to Kitchin, Mar. 3.
- <sup>82</sup> Joseph P. Tumulty, *Woodrow Wilson As I Knew Him*, p. 202.
- <sup>83</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LIII, p. 3463.
- <sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3464.
- <sup>85</sup> Seymour says that the Gore resolution was defeated by an "impressive" vote, but he fails to mention the amendment which amounted to a substitute resolution of opposite import (*American Diplomacy during the World War*, p. 117). Millis tells of the substitute but says that the original was tabled also (*Road to War*, p. 277).
- <sup>86</sup> Kitchin to D. A. and W. H. Fishel, Mar. 5; to R. J. Markoe, Mar. 11; to William A. Lucas, Mar. 7, 1916.
- <sup>87</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LIII, pp. 3689-3720.
- <sup>88</sup> Kitchin to D. A. and W. H. Fishel, Mar. 5, 1916.
- <sup>89</sup> Kitchin to H. Q. Alexander, Mar. 9, 1916.
- <sup>90</sup> New York *Herald*, Mar. 2, 1916.
- <sup>91</sup> David Lawrence in New York *Evening Post*, Mar. 2, 1916.
- <sup>92</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LIII, pp. 3689-3720.
- <sup>93</sup> New York *Herald*, Mar. 8, 1916.
- <sup>94</sup> New York *Evening Post*, Mar. 8, 1916. Parker Anderson



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in the Greensboro *Daily News*, Mar. 8, 9, quotes Kitchin, R. N. Page, and others to the effect that the issue had been dodged; that a large majority in the House favored a warning resolution but could not approve the McLemore resolution in particular.

<sup>95</sup> Kitchin to W. P. White, Mar. 9, 1916.

<sup>96</sup> Harry Elmer Barnes, *Genesis of the World War*, pp. 626–629; Hartley Grattan, *Why We Fought*, pp. 363–364; Walter Millis, *Road to War*, pp. 273–274; William Allen White, *Woodrow Wilson*, pp. 328–331; George Sylvester Vierick, *the Strangest Friendship in History*, pp. 182–183.

<sup>97</sup> C. H. Claudy to Kitchin, Mar. 24, 1921.

<sup>98</sup> Kitchin to Claudy, Apr. 2, 1921.

<sup>99</sup> Mrs. Kitchin and all the surviving sons and daughters who were adults at the time have assured the author that they remember very well having heard Mr. Kitchin tell of the conference numbers of times, and their recollections accord with the story related above. See correspondence between Mr. Mills Kitchin and the author, Apr. 25, Aug. 22, 1936 (in Kitchin collection).

<sup>100</sup> Judge E. Yates Webb to the author, Nov. 28, 1935. (In Kitchin collection.)

<sup>101</sup> Charles H. Sloan to the author, Jan. 2 (supplemented Jan. 29, 1936. *Ibid.*).

<sup>102</sup> Senator B. C. Clark to the author, Aug. 15, 1936.

<sup>103</sup> Allan L. Benson to the author, Dec. 31, 1935. (*Ibid.*)

<sup>104</sup> Told to the author by Representative J. W. Collier, Mr. Mills Kitchin, and several others. See letter from Mr. Mills Kitchin to the author, *op. cit.*

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### CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup> Joseph P. Tumulty, *Woodrow Wilson As I Knew Him*, pp. 257-258.

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, Feb. 20, 1916.

<sup>3</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LIII, pp. 4711-4712.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. and Mrs. William Edenborn to Kitchin, Mar. 9; Kitchin's reply, Mar. 13; Representative H. I. Emerson to Kitchin, Mar. 10; Kitchin to Lansing, Mar. 11, 1916.

<sup>5</sup> *New York Times*, Apr. 23, 1916.

<sup>6</sup> *Greensboro Daily News*, Apr. 28, 29, 1916.

<sup>7</sup> *Standard Laconic*, May 5, 1916 (clipping in Kitchin collection).

<sup>8</sup> *New York Times*, Apr. 30; *Herald*, April, May, 1916; clippings.

<sup>9</sup> Unidentified clippings.

<sup>10</sup> Concord, N. C. *Daily Tribune*, June 10, 1916 (clipping).

<sup>11</sup> Villard to Kitchin, July 12, 1916.

<sup>12</sup> B. B. Williams to Kitchin, July 10, Kitchin to Williams, July 11; Kitchin to W. T. Dortsch, July 20, and to J. B. Lloyd, Nov. 27, 1916.

<sup>13</sup> Kitchin papers, Aug., 1916. The most forceful of these protests was from A. F. Eshelman of High Point, N. C., August 18.

<sup>14</sup> Kitchin to Lansing, Aug. 11; Lansing to Kitchin, Aug. 17, 1916.

<sup>15</sup> Mrs. Forbes to Kitchin, June 28, Aug. 11, 1916.

<sup>16</sup> Walter Millis, *Road to War*, p. 126.

<sup>17</sup> Kitchin to Mrs. Forbes, Aug. 19, 1916.

<sup>18</sup> *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, edited by Charles Seymour, Vol. II. Chaps. iii-vii.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

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- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 91.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 201–202; Seymour, *American Diplomacy during the World War*, pp. 152–161.
- <sup>22</sup> *New York Times*, Dec. 13, 1916.
- <sup>23</sup> Kitchin to Bryan, Dec. 19, 1916 (in the Bryan papers in the Library of Congress).
- <sup>24</sup> H. B. Hemmeter, President of Concordia College, Conover, N. C., to Kitchin, Feb. 13, Mar. 31; Kitchin's reply, Apr. 3, 1917.
- <sup>25</sup> W. J. Olive to Kitchin, Feb. 8, 1917.
- <sup>26</sup> Greensboro *Daily News*, Mar. 4, *et seq.* Kitchin collection, Mar., 1917.
- <sup>27</sup> Quoted in *Literary Digest*, June 24, 1917.
- <sup>28</sup> *New York World*, Apr. 1, 1917.
- <sup>29</sup> Amos Pinchot to Kitchin, March, 1917.
- <sup>30</sup> Rev. W. A. Stanbury to Kitchin, Apr. 12, 1917.
- <sup>31</sup> Dated March 31, 1917.
- <sup>32</sup> Dated Apr. 4, 1917.
- <sup>33</sup> Address to Congress, Feb. 26, 1917, *Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, edited by Albert Shaw, Vol. I, pp. 363–367, esp. p. 366.
- <sup>34</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LIV, p. 4640.
- <sup>35</sup> Daily press, Mar. 5, 1917.
- <sup>36</sup> Greensboro *Daily News*, Mar. 4, Mar. 5, 1917.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 11, 1917.
- <sup>38</sup> *New York Sun*, Apr. 4, 1917; *Wall Street Journal*, Apr. 3, 1917.
- <sup>39</sup> Slayden to Kitchin, Mar. 10, 1917.
- <sup>40</sup> Kitchin to Slayden, Mar. 16, 1917.
- <sup>41</sup> *Messages and Papers, op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 375.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 372–383.
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 363.



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<sup>44</sup> E. Y. Webb to the author, May 9, 1936.

<sup>45</sup> New York *Evening Post*, April 5, 6, 1917, New York *Evening Sun*, April 5, 1917, New York *World*, April 6, 1917.

<sup>46</sup> New York *World*, April 6, 1917.

<sup>47</sup> Told to the author by Mrs. Kitchin.

<sup>48</sup> New York *World*, Apr. 6, 1917.

<sup>49</sup> David Lawrence in the New York *Evening Post*, Apr. 6, 1917; further material in same issue. See also *Financial America*, Aug. 8, 1918. The scene was described to the author by Mrs. Kitchin, Representative Collier, Mr. A. L. Brooks, and others.

<sup>50</sup> Greensboro *Daily News*, Apr. 6, 1917. See also New York *Times*, same date.

<sup>51</sup> Told to the author by Mrs. Kitchin, Representative Collier, A. L. Brooks, and others.

<sup>52</sup> New York *World*, Apr. 6, 1917.

<sup>53</sup> New York *Times*, Apr. 6, 7, 1917.

<sup>54</sup> Clippings in Kitchin collection.

<sup>55</sup> E. Y. Webb to the author, Nov. 28, 1935 (In Kitchin collection).

<sup>56</sup> Undated anonymous note written on the back of a sealed and empty envelope.

<sup>57</sup> Dr. Claude H. Corke, Asheville, N. C., to Kitchin, Apr. 6, 1917.

<sup>58</sup> J. A. Taylor, Washington, D. C., to Kitchin, Apr. 6, 1917.

<sup>59</sup> Ralph M. Shaw, Chicago, to Kitchin, Apr. 6, 1917.

<sup>60</sup> Dr. A. S. Mitchell, Winston-Salem, N. C., to Kitchin, Apr. 6, 1917.

<sup>61</sup> Rocky Mount, N. C., *Evening Telegram*, quoted in New York *Times*, Apr. 7, 1917.



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- <sup>62</sup> J. A. Taylor, Washington, D.C., to Kitchin, Apr. 6, 1917.
- <sup>63</sup> Rev. W. A. Stanbury to Kitchin, April 12, 1917.
- <sup>64</sup> D. A., M., T. F., Ben, Harry, and "Sal" Fishel, Vaughn, N. C., to Kitchin, April 6, 1917.
- <sup>65</sup> W. S. Durham, Silver City, N. C., to Kitchin, Apr. 6, 1917.
- <sup>66</sup> J. T. Edgerton, Henly, N. C., to Kitchin, Apr. 6, 1917.
- <sup>67</sup> Rev. W. E. Abernethy, Reidsville, N. C., Apr. 6, 1917.
- <sup>68</sup> B. P. Terrell, Warrenton, N. C., to Kitchin, Apr. 9, 1917.
- <sup>69</sup> W. S. Durham, Silver City, N. C., to Kitchin, Apr. 6, 1917.
- <sup>70</sup> E. F. Hicks, Calypso, N. C., chairman of a citizens' committee which voted approval of Kitchin's stand, Apr. 6, 1917. There were numbers of other reports from such citizens' committees.
- <sup>71</sup> Roy Webster, Asheville, N. C., Apr. 6, 1917.
- <sup>72</sup> H. Q. Alexander, President of the N. C. Farmers' Union, Apr. 6, 1917.
- <sup>73</sup> W. B. Ward, Concord, N. C., Apr. 5, 1917.
- <sup>74</sup> S. E. Daniel, Littleton, N. C., Apr. 6, 1917.
- <sup>75</sup> T. B. Deloache, Burlington, N. C., Apr. 6, 1917.
- <sup>76</sup> B. B. Williams, Warrenton, N. C., Apr. 6, 1917.
- <sup>77</sup> John W. Lambeth, Thomasville, N. C., Apr. 6, 1917.
- <sup>78</sup> Rev. J. G. Pulliam, Chapel Hill, N. C., Apr. 6, 1917.
- <sup>79</sup> Jos. K. Hooker, Sylva, N. C., Apr. 6, 1917. See also, W. L. Scott, Burlington, N. C., Apr. 7, 1917; Roscoe Turner, Elizabeth City, N. C., Apr. 6, 1917.

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### CHAPTER V

<sup>1</sup> *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, June 21, 1918; *New York Sun*, May 20, 1918; a Baltimore paper, June 6, 1918 (clipping in Kitchin collection).

<sup>2</sup> Told to the author by Dr. B. B. Kendrick. The economist in question was a neighbor of Dr. Kendrick's at the time in Forest Hills, Long Island, but his name is not recalled.

<sup>3</sup> Related by members of the Kitchin family.

<sup>4</sup> *Messages and Papers*, Vol. I, p. 376.

<sup>5</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LV, p. 1119.

<sup>6</sup> *New York World*, Apr. 21, 1917.

<sup>7</sup> Speech of May 18, 1917.

<sup>8</sup> See the editorial versions in *New York Herald*, May 28, *Sun*, July 11, *Tribune*, July 24, 1918.

<sup>9</sup> See the editorial versions in *New York Herald*, May 28, *Sun*, July 11, *Tribune*, July 24, 1918.

<sup>10</sup> Correspondence between Kitchin and Fordney, July 3, Aug. 1, 1917.

<sup>11</sup> Claude Kitchin, "Raising Money by Taxation," *National Monthly*, Mar., 1917. Cf. *New York Times*, July 30, 1917.

<sup>12</sup> Correspondence between J. J. Dunn and Kitchin, Feb. 13, 1918. See also correspondence with Professor J. M. Catell, April, 1917.

<sup>13</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LV, p. 2813; *New York Times*, July 13, 1917; *Greensboro Daily News*, May 24, 1917; "Raising Money," *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> Correspondence between Kitchin and Collier, September, 1918, esp., Sep. 26.

<sup>15</sup> *New York Times*, May 11, 1917.

<sup>16</sup> June 3, 1917, Aug. 9, 1918.

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- <sup>17</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LV, Appendix, pp. 483-505.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. LV, p. 2419.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. LVI, pp. 661-702.
- <sup>28</sup> *New York Times*, May 28, 1918.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, July 30, 1917.
- <sup>30</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LV, p. 2551.
- <sup>31</sup> Professor T. S. Adams, "Federal Taxes upon Incomes and Excess Profits," *American Economic Review*, Vol. VIII, Supplement, pp. 18-25. Professor Adams came to hold that both forms were too difficult to administer, and in 1921 advocated the repeal of all profits taxes. (*Quarterly Journal of Economics*, May, 1921.)
- <sup>32</sup> Carl C. Plehn, "War Profits and Excess Profits," *Ibid.*, Vol. X, pp. 283-298. Stuart Cramer to Kitchin, Sep. 10, 1918.
- <sup>33</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LV, pp. 524-527.
- <sup>34</sup> Correspondence of Cramer, Brookings, and Kitchin, Oct., 1918.
- <sup>35</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LV, p. 2813. Greensboro *Daily News*, June 1, 1917.
- <sup>36</sup> Correspondence between Kitchin and Sir Thomas White, Sep. 3, 6, 1917.
- <sup>37</sup> *Washington Times*, June 11, 1917, *New York Times*, Oct. 1, 1917. Among Kitchin's current papers was a prop-

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aganda sheet issued by the Reynolds Tobacco Co., announcing in bold-face type: "*Senator Underwood calls the excess profits tax the most unfair ever brought to his attention.*" Dated May 7, 1917.

<sup>38</sup> Joseph P. Tumulty, *Woodrow Wilson as I Knew Him*, pp. 169-170. See also McAdoo to Kitchin, Sep. 17, 1917.

<sup>39</sup> Kitchin to W. J. Norwood, Oct. 29, 1917.

<sup>40</sup> R. N. Page to Kitchin, June 14, 1917.

<sup>41</sup> Kitchin to K. K. Bridgers, June 21, 1917.

<sup>42</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LV, p. 7573.

<sup>43</sup> Claude Kitchin, "Who Will Pay the New Taxes," *Forum*, July 15, 1918.

<sup>44</sup> F. M. Simmons, *Statesman of the Old South; Memoirs and Addresses*, edited by J. Fred Rippy, p. 64.

<sup>45</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. LVI, appendix, pp. 661-702.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Greensboro Daily News*, Sep. 8, 1918; *New York Times*, Feb. 9, 1919.

<sup>52</sup> *Christian Herald*, May 28, 1918.

<sup>53</sup> *New York Evening Post*, May 29, 1918.

<sup>54</sup> *New York Times*, May 11, 1917.

<sup>55</sup> Clippings from *Charleston News and Courier*, *Birmingham Age-Herald*, *Louisville Courier-Journal*, and *Memphis Commercial Appeal* (in Kitchin collection).

<sup>56</sup> Clippings in Kitchin collection. The quotation is from the *Duluth News-Tribune*.

<sup>57</sup> *New York Sun*, May 20, 27, June 8, 1918. See reply to



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the *Sun* by the *Washington Times*, one of the very few dailies friendly to Kitchin, June 21, 1918.

<sup>58</sup> *New York World*, May 30, 1918.

<sup>59</sup> *Baltimore Sun*, May 3, 1917.

<sup>60</sup> A Baltimore paper, June 6, 1918 (clipping in Kitchin collection). See also "TAKING HIMSELF SERIOUSLY." *Wall Street Journal*, June 26, 1918.

<sup>61</sup> *Collier's*, June, 1917.

<sup>62</sup> *New York Times*, June 4, 1918; *Literary Digest*, June 15, 1918.

<sup>63</sup> *New York Sun*, Aug. 8, 1918; *Literary Digest*, June 15, 1918.

<sup>64</sup> *New York Herald*, May 8, *Sun*, July 11, *Tribune*, July 24, 1918.

<sup>65</sup> Cartoon by Darling ("Ding") in *Collier's*, June 16, 1917.

<sup>66</sup> *New York Times*, Aug. 23, 1918.

<sup>67</sup> *New York Sun*, Sep. 24, 1918.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, July 28, 1916.

<sup>69</sup> E. G., *New York Sun*, July 28, 1918.

<sup>70</sup> Kitchin to W. M. Calder, Oct. 30, 1918.

<sup>71</sup> Correspondence between Kitchin and William S. Woods, Editor of the *Literary Digest*, Nov. 27, Dec. 2, 1918. See also correspondence with Mr. John Schleichter of *Leslie's*, July, 1917.

<sup>72</sup> Kitchin-Jessup correspondence, Oct. 21-28, 1918.

<sup>73</sup> October 30, 1917.

<sup>74</sup> October 15, 1917.

<sup>75</sup> *Louisville Courier-Journal*, June 6, 1918.

<sup>76</sup> Dated Mar. 13, 1918.

<sup>77</sup> Correspondence, Apr.-Aug., 1918.

<sup>78</sup> *New York Sun*, editorial, "THE ONLY WAY TO BEAT

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KITCHIN," Oct. 24, 1918; another of similar theme, 28 (quoted above).

<sup>79</sup> New York *Sun*, Nov. 6, 1918.

<sup>80</sup> New York *World*, Nov. 8, Dec. 26, 1918.

<sup>81</sup> Hartford *Times*, Dec. 26, 1918.

<sup>82</sup> Letters from J. M. K. Catell, Apr. 11, 1917; W. E. Dodd, Nov. 27, 1917; Judge George W. Connor, Sep. 14, 1918; J. M. Baer, July 14, 1917; Col. Frank Hobgood, Oct. 28, 1918.

<sup>83</sup> W. J. Bryan to Kitchin, Oct. 14, 1918.

<sup>84</sup> Secretary McAdoo to Kitchin, Sep. 17, 1917.

<sup>85</sup> Greensboro *Record*, editorial, Apr. 18, 1918.

<sup>86</sup> Thos. D. Schall to Kitchin, May 28, 1918.

## CHAPTER VI

<sup>1</sup> Salt Lake *Times*, Dec. 29, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Daily press, Dec. 8-10, 1920.

<sup>3</sup> Clippings, Dec., 1920, Kitchin collection.

<sup>4</sup> Kitchin to Collier, July 27, 1921; also August 5.

<sup>5</sup> Correspondence between Kitchin and Garrett, Collier, and Oldfield, July-August, 1921; also minutes of caucus, in Kitchin collection.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, especially Kitchin to Oldfield, July 23, 1921.

<sup>7</sup> Claude Kitchin, *Memorial Addresses Delivered in the House of Representatives*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>8</sup> Jonas Smith to Kitchin, undated, filed 1921.

<sup>9</sup> England to Kitchin, August 18, 1921.

<sup>10</sup> New York *Times*, April 12, 1921.

<sup>11</sup> Undated letter from Bryan, apparently in Aug., 1921.

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<sup>12</sup> See numerous letters from Kitchin in the summer and fall of 1921 and thereafter. On the bonus, see Greensboro *Daily News*, June 1, and Raleigh *News and Observer*, June 13, 1920. On compulsory military training, Kitchin to D. R. Rutter, Feb. 16, 1920, and Bryan to Kitchin, undated, apparently early 1920. On civil liberty, correspondence with England, July, 1921.

<sup>13</sup> Kitchin to Oldfield, July 23, 1921.

<sup>14</sup> See Kitchin's correspondence with England and Oldfield, August, 1921; esp. England to Kitchin, Aug. 18; the minutes of the Democratic caucus (in Kitchin collection); and the "Minority Views" prepared by Kitchin; *House Journal*, 67th Congress, 1st Session, part 2, p. 350 (copy in Kitchin collection).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Oldfield to Kitchin, Aug. 23, 1921.

<sup>17</sup> Editorial written by Secretary Daniels in Raleigh *News and Observer*, June 1, 1923. Mr. Daniels confirmed his authorship of the editorial in a letter to the author, July 15, 1936.

<sup>18</sup> Clippings in the Kitchin collection.

## APPENDIX

### FURTHER REPROBATION AND PRAISE FOR KITCHIN'S ANTI-WAR STAND

As further illustration of the popular reaction toward the war and toward Kitchin, the following excerpts from the many hundreds of messages which he received after his speech against the war resolution are submitted for the benefit of readers especially interested in this field. As stated in the text, the great majority of these messages was commendatory. Doubtless there was some truth in the Reverend Stanbury's claim that those who approved were more ready to write than those who condemned. Even so, the evidence seems to indicate that a considerable majority of "the great silent masses," at least in North Carolina, endorsed Kitchin's stand.

The messages and comments (undifferentiated as to letters and telegrams) are grouped in the following order: (1) those which condemned without reserve, (2) those which disagreed with his position but approved his courage in voting his convictions, (3) those which bore nothing but praise.

All dates are April 6 unless otherwise noted.

"There will be a wave of keen disappointment . . . that will sweep over the state because of the fact that Representative Claude Kitchin . . . has failed to stand by the President and the vast majority of the Democrats in Congress. . . ." The Kitchin-La Follette group "tried to destroy the honor



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of the nation, . . . their families, their state and their country." (*Raleigh News and Observer*.) "You appear to have insulted the intelligence not only of your children but of the American people also." (S. F. Houston, Philadelphia, April 7, 1917.) "North Carolinians residing in Maryland note with deepest regret your opposition to our Chief Executive and loyal Members of Congress to uphold the honor and dignity of our country." (North Carolina Society of Baltimore.) "It would be a gracious act on your part, which the whole country would appreciate, if you would resign the position which you hold as nominal majority leader of the House. After what has happened you can hardly be under the delusion that you are the real leader. . . . Certainly no one else in the country thinks so." (Mercer G. Johnson, Baltimore.) "The responsibility of your position makes your traitorous act in voting against America more contemptible than the others. You will go down to oblivion save to be remembered as Benedict Arnold is remembered." (Signed "American," undated but filed with April 6-7 papers.) "Voting convictions on war resolution merits to this extent respect. Failure to see that acceptance and retention of leadership under these conditions dishonorable and damaging to this country. Would cast discredit on yourself and the House." (O. Bergin, Philadelphia.)

Would have voted for measure under the circumstances but admired Kitchin's sincerity and courage — "one of the ablest and best men North Carolina has ever produced." (Ex-Governor R. B. Glenn, Raleigh.) "Differing in opinion as I do, I still feel that your action was fully in accord with the courage and sincerity which I have come to expect in all your public service." (J. G. deR. Hamilton, Chapel Hill.) "While I disagree with your views on the war resolution, I

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have full confidence in your sincerity and honesty; admire your manhood and courage. . . ." (D. S. Alias, Asheville, N. C.) ". . . I am as radically opposed to the views represented by that position as any of your detractors, but I feel like apologizing for those of my fellow-Americans who so readily and rashly attribute to base motives any point of view differing from their own." (Thornton Fitzhugh, Los Angeles, Cal.)

"Eternally right . . . argument unanswerable." (John L. Randleman, lawyer, Salisbury, N. C.) "Most patriotic speech ever made in Congress." Ninety per cent of people agree. (Jim Robinson, merchant, Reidsville, N. C.) Had been a follower of Wilson but could not follow him in this matter. He had been elected "to steer us clear of the seething hell pit that is now boiling in Europe." (Rush Stroupe, lawyer, Shelby, N. C.) ". . . Descended of 200 years of American and North Carolina ancestry—neither pro-German nor pro-English. . . . We should not take either side. . . . The thinking people are with you." (P. R. Hines, lawyer, Ayden, N. C.) "Admire your stand. The masses are with you." (Julius Brown, lawyer, Greenville, N. C.) "We have counted the people in this county that favor war and found only four." (L. K. Pulliam, King, N. C.) "Thank you personally for the interest you have manifested in the great silent masses . . . whose voices have not been heard in this great crisis, but who must suffer all the pangs and hardships of war. . . ." (A. L. Petree, physician, Greensboro, N. C.) "I am only a little speck in the political pantry, but I hereby pledge you my support. . . . The People are on your side." (W. H. Davis, editor of *The Hornet*, which confessed in its heading to being "the hottest Democratic paper in all America." Fork, N. C., April 9.) "I think I know the common

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people of the state, and no jingo that breathes is more loyal than they are, but they stand with you. . . ." (J. M. Templeton, Cary, N. C.) "Don't be discouraged by the criticisms of newspapers and war-crazed fanatics. As never before the people believe in you. . . ." (C. L. Ballentine, Cardenas, N. C., April 7.) "Profound appreciation of your patriotic attitude. . . . Have heard nothing but words of commendation. . . ." (R. O. Everett, lawyer, Durham, N. C.) "Were you mine enemy instead of my friend, I would feel like taking off my hat to you." (R. W. McFarland, Wilson, N. C.) "This is simply to say to you that I approve the wisdom of your position and the courage displayed by its maintenance. . . ." (George H. Bradshaw, lawyer, Greensboro, N. C.) "Permit me to express to you my hearty appreciation of the boldness and self-sacrifice which evidently moved you. . . ." (W. L. Poteat, president of Wake Forest College, Kitchin's alma mater, April 18.) "Anybody can follow a band wagon but it takes a man with nerve to stand for the right when it seems that everyone is against his ideas." (Joseph H. Hooker, Sylva, N. C.) "Magnificent speech. . . . It exhibited a degree of moral courage that is indeed rare in these times. . . ." (Martin Douglas, grandson of Stephen A. Douglas, Greensboro, N. C.) "I knew 'Captain Buck' and I know all your brothers, and I know there never was a Kitchin afraid to express his honest convictions." (R. T. McNair, Emporia, Va.) "Not until today have I felt really regretful that I am no longer a Member of Congress. And regret is felt now only because I could not be with you in your magnificent and courageous stand against what you feel and I feel to be an avoidable war." (Warren Worth Bailey, Johnstown, Pa.) "The putting of our country into war is the maddest thing that could have happened." (W. S. Clayton,

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printer, Reidsville, N. C.) "If only President Wilson and his crowd could be the ones to stop the first bullets, it would not be so bad. . . ." (Claude Lamb, High Point, N. C.) "Time will vindicate and coming generations will applaud your vote. Outside the bought up press and the useless jingoes, three-fourths of the people of this state are with you." (R. R. Cowan, Durham, N. C.) "Your speech will be accorded rank with Lincoln's Gettysburg address. . . ." (Gilmore L. Nisbet, Waxhaw, N. C., April 7.) "Future generations — if there be any — will read it with pride." (John W. Kurfees, Germantown, N. C.) "Time will show who was right. . . ." (W. G. Hedgepeth, Rocky Mount, N. C.) "It is the greatest act of your life and will live long after the war drums have ceased and the battle flags have been furled." (O. B. Eaton, mayor, Winston-Salem, N. C.) "Thank God for the testimony which it was permitted you to bear . . . your great address . . . will stand in history." (H. B. Hammeter, president Concordia College, Conover, N. C.) "Would to God there had been a sufficient number of men like you in that body." (J. A. Edwards, Snow Hill, N. C., April 7.) "Would that we had more like you. Then would many of us loyal American citizens not feel the humiliation of the prostitution of our national honor. . . ." (Rev. A. R. Beck, Statesville, N. C.) "I just want to say, God bless you, Mr. Kitchin. I am proud that North Carolina has a son who can stand up for the right regardless of worldly honors." (W. L. Johnson, Varina, N. C.) "Thank God for a man who has the strength and the will to stand for peace and right against all the pressure that must have been brought to bear against you by the blood-lusters." (J. B. Earhart, Lakeview, N. C.)



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